TELOS

UMBER 13 FALL 1972

Table of Contents

Articles:

SERGIO BOLOGNA: *Class Composition and Theory of the Party*

KAREL KOSIK: *Our Present Crisis*

LUCIO COLLETTI: *The Theory of the Crash*

RONALD ARONSON: *The Root of Sartre's Thought*

MAYNARD SOLOMON: *Marx and Bloch*

GIOVANNI PIANA: *History and Existence in Husserl*

Notes and Commentary:

MAXY BEML: *William Burroughs and the Invisible Generation*

CONSTANTIN SINELNIKOV: *Early "Marxist" Critiques of Reich*

Reviews:

CRISTIANO CAMPORESI: Bertell Ollman, *Alienation*

BRUNO RAMIREZ: Bologna and Negri, eds., *Operai e Stato*

ALEXANDER DELFINI: Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*

ROBERT D'AMICO: Jean Piaget, *Epistemologie des Science de l'Homme*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Telos

An International Cultural Quarterly

Number 13 Fall 1972

Table of Contents

ARTICLES:

Introduction to Bologna's "Class Composition and Theory of the Party" 1
Paul Piccone

Class Composition and the Theory of the Party at the Origin of the Workers-Council Movement 3
Sergio Bologna

Introduction to Kosik's "Our Present Crisis" 28
Karel Kovanda and James Schmidt

Our Present Crisis 30
Karel Kosik

The Theory of the Crash 34
Lucio Colletti

Interpreting Husserl and Heidegger: The Root of Sartre's Thought 47
Ronald Aronson

Marx and Bloch: Reflection on Utopia and Art 68
Maynard Solomon

History and Existence in Husserl's Manuscripts 86
Giovanni Piana

NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

William Burroughs and the Invisible Generation 125
Maxy Beml

Early "Marxist" Critiques of Reich 131
Constantin Sinelnikov

REVIEWS:

Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Concept of Man in Capitalist Society* . . . 138
Cristiano Camporesi

Sergio Bologna & Antonio Negri, eds., *Operai e Stato: Lotte Operaie e Riforma dello Stato Capitalistico tra Rivoluzione d'Ottobre e New Deal* 140
Bruno Ramirez

Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt* 147
Alexander Delfini

Jean Piaget, *Epistemologie des Sciences de l'Homme* 156
Robert D'Amico

© Although ideas should be neither sold nor bought, all of this material is copyrighted. Permission to reprint, however, can be readily obtained from the Editor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTRODUCTION TO BOLOGNA'S "CLASS COMPOSITION AND THEORY OF THE PARTY"

by

Paul Piccone

That the '60's have brought about major theoretical developments in European Marxist thought is well-known. Yet, with the exception of some "new working class" notions and sporadic translations of documents, there has been very little discussion of the specific positions of even the most advanced extra-parliamentary leftist groups. Starting with this issue, *Telos* will publish, with extensive commentary, some of what we consider the most significant theoretical works by the Italian extra-parliamentary left in an effort to assess their import for whatever remains of the American New Left. Bologna's essay, along with the work of the Potere Operaio group in general, is particularly relevant to us since it unambiguously points to the U.S. as "where it's at" with the class-struggle, and develops an analysis which relegates events in Western Europe and elsewhere as peripheral and provincial footnotes to the U.S. experience.

The Bologna essay is extremely valuable in that it seeks to concretely re-examine a crucial segment of labor history which bridges the classical socialist phase of the Second and Third International, and the post-Keynesian period: the German workers' councils experience. Repudiated by official communist interpretations as the disastrous outcome of privileged labor aristocracies' politics or of a generally reformist program, and idealized by some ultra-leftist circles as the acme of communism, the history and meaning of the German workers' councils have remained unexamined behind a screen of ideological rhetoric. In relating their ideology to the German class composition of the first two decades of this century, Bologna associates the councils with the highly skilled work-force employed in advanced German industries which, because of the resourcefulness and creativity of this very work-force, had come to occupy a leading semi-monopolistic position in the world market. This economic-technical supremacy translated directly into paternalistic and privileged work-conditions for a sector of the total working class which, as such, became a labor aristocracy. From this, it is very easy to relate the ideology and politics of the participants of the councils movement to their objective position in the productive apparatus.

This preliminary posing of the problem has a specific function: to checkmate from the very beginning any discussion of class-consciousness and alienation – or precisely those themes which have been most vigorously articulated by Hegelian and Western Marxists. Although the analysis turns out to be sufficiently credible, it creates more problems than it solves. The whole Hegelian-Marxist problematic of consciousness and alienation had been articulated in the 1920's in order to give a Marxist analysis of Marxism itself while at the same time explain the postponement of revolution and tackle scores of problems that "orthodox" Marxism never confronted; e.g., false consciousness in the working class, cultural hegemony, the generation of bourgeois relations within revolutionary organizations, etc. The great unpopularity of these interpretations has been primarily a result of the fact that they immediately discredited most official communist positions and presented most modern Marxisms as the bourgeois positivist aberrations that they had become. Without the Hegelian dimension, the history of Marxism and working class setbacks in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the last half-century have to be explained by means of paralogisms such as class immaturity and social-democratic betrayals, or by sweeping everything under the Russian rug and arguing that all is well with the working class' historical march to power – only now it is delegated to bureaucrats of the "first workers' state". If these alternatives are found to be too flimsy, we are faced with a total rejection of the Marxist problematic in favor of the managerial revolution, the welfare state, and the myriad of other pseudo-alternatives devised by ex-communists. The solution Bologna chooses is that of class immaturity, which ends up by up-dating the coming-into-being of the working class to very recently so as to keep the "orthodox" account of revolution fundamentally unchanged. Thus, notwithstanding the many penetrating insights, the whole analysis ends up as part of a metaphysical mosaic constructed by disgruntled intellectuals who, disenchanted with the bankrupt social-democratic policies of official communist parties, attempt to formulate alternatives to them. Caught within the positivistic theoretical orientation of official communism, however, they end up by reiterating on a higher level all the bankrupt positions that they seek to reject.

Given their particular location and the very structure of German capital at that time, the workers' councils are thus condemned to fail from the very beginning. As Bologna clearly shows, the politics and organization of the councils were inextricably connected with a backward capitalist plan which Fordism in the U.S. had already rendered historically obsolete: the highly skilled worker rooted in his factory and familiar with every aspect of his work – thus able to take over and run production independently of owners and bosses – had already been scrapped across the ocean with the introduction of the assembly line, the fragmentation of the skilled worker into minute and interchangeable functions, and the introduction of social wages altogether unconnected with the productivity quotas of the earlier Taylorism. Only the rigid character of German industry prevented this solution in Germany and, consequently, the councils movement precipitated a crisis of hitherto unknown dimensions. Unlike all earlier crises which had been determined by capital, this one is seen as determined by labor – something which in itself already constitutes a victory since it implies that working class hegemony has replaced capitalist hegemony. By elaborating this Gramscian and generally Hegelian Marxist theme, Bologna locates the historical significance of the councils not in the results achieved, but in the very determination of the crisis which forced capital to accept conditions of struggle laid down by labor.

Again, an original insight is forced to entail disastrous political programs: from the logic of cyclic crises which brilliantly explains both capitalist developments and the restructurings of class composition, Bologna and Potere Operaio conclude that the most crucial political task is to anticipate capital's countermoves so as to be able to determind the crisis and thus explode the whole system. What is overlooked, however, is that the transformation of the highly skilled councils' participants into the uprooted, unskilled, highly mobile worker of modern assembly-line production may have *institutionalized alienation* and rendered it unassailable from within the *immediate* productive process in the sense that the new worker is no longer *able* nor *willing* to take over so that the new form of domination cannot be destroyed at the assembly line, but can only be challenged by other oppositional forces that capital creates in the very process of class re-composition.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bologna's whole analysis is grounded in dogmatic axioms which are indefensible positivistic reifications of Marxist theory: notions such as "class", "worker", and "cadre" become uncritically accepted abstract categories which, to use Debray's aphorism, clothe the present with the masks of earlier historical scenes. The intrinsic revolutionary determinations of the "working class" that in Marx is the *conclusion* of a highly theoretical analysis of objective historical conditions, is a-historically assumed and transposed into a new context lacking all the determinations that may have once validated it. Whereas in a situation of 19th century capitalism *immediate* relation to the means of production may have determined life-style and consequently consciousness, thus objectively generating a potentially revolutionary proletariat, this is no longer the case precisely because of what Bologna and Potere Operaio call *the socialization of the factory* – a process according to which all of society becomes a factory in a context characterized by the juxtaposition of *social capital* and the *collective worker* that Marx had already projected in the *Grundrisse*. Thus, the new *collective worker* is no longer the monkey-wrench-wielding gorilla depicted by "socialist realism", but *everyone who happens to work*. As such, revolutionary consciousness becomes a function of a whole series of concrete social determinations that reified Marxism not only misses but altogether occludes under its ideological fog of historically obsolete notions.

The analysis would have been incomplete if it only related class composition to political activity: both have to be themselves related to ongoing theoretical discussions. Thus, Bologna's essay had to include a discussion of Lenin and Luxemburg. Unlike most discussions on the subject, however, Bologna's avoids any sharp contraposition between spontaneism and direction or any such-like antinomies, and seeks to relate theory to the concrete organizational terrain within which Lenin and Luxemburg operated. Lenin's theory of the party is seen as appropriate to the 1905 Russian context where the workers were a social vangard within a sea of peasants while Luxemburg's constant stress on spontaneity turns out to have been necessitated by having to oppose a bureaucratized social-democratic party from within with a legitimate weapon meant to undermine the whole structure. Ignoring the merits and shortcomings of such an account, it should be pointed out that the upshot of the discussion is toward a scientistic direction whose ultimate goal is the hierarchical location of all theoretical-organizational struggles within a presumably universally-valid scheme from which every future revolution can be rigorously deduced. It is not surprising, therefore, that the concrete differences between Lenin and Luxemburg are ultimately boiled down to different stages in the development of the working class in their respective countries!

Notwithstanding its numerous heuristic bursts of creative insights, the general trend of the analysis is ultimately but an abstract negation of the official line of the Italian Communist Party out of which most of the Potere Operaio people have recently broken – which explains why, among other things, they have, for all practical purposes, been just about politically smashed by it. This does not affect both the high quality of their work, and the relevance of the themes investigated. It is for this reason that *Telos* accepts the challenge of their writings and will seek to develop the same themes and high level of analysis within the still theoretically primitive left-overs of the American New Left.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLASS COMPOSITION AND THE THEORY OF THE PARTY AT THE ORIGIN OF THE WORKERS-COUNCILS MOVEMENT *

by

Sergio Bologna

Structure of the labor force and political class-composition in Germany before World War I

Highly specialized workers in the machine industry constituted a substantial part of the factory leaders in the German workers-councils movement. Since this professional figure took on a social and political dimension in 1918, it is legitimate to ask whether the structure of pre-war German industry generated this type of work-force, and whether these workers' position in production was directly linked to their political adherence to the workers-councils system.

Pre-war German machine industry had not reached yet a level of concentration and rationalization similar to that of mining, steel, and electric sectors. It consisted mainly of middle-size establishments employing between 1,000 and 5,000 workers distributed in the traditional centers of German industrialism: Rhineland-Westphalia, Wuerttemburg, Saxony, the Berlin region, the Hamburg region, Oldenburg and Bavaria. It was the newest German industrial sector. Its most important products were bikes, motorcycles, machine tooks, office machines, sewing machines, tools, and automobiles. Specialization was not very advanced. In fact, almost all major manufacturers of bikes and later motorcycles also produced office machines and sewing machines. Only the German branch of Singer in Hamburg later became just a producer of sewing machines – and this came about because it was a subsidiary of a U.S. corporation which had already achieved a monopoly position. The auto industry had not yet attained its subsequent importance. (In the United States this happened around 1910-12 but, in Germany, it only came about in 1924 with Opel.) Auto production was carried out on a limited scale in small to middle size establishments. The auxilliary industry to the manufacturing of engines experienced a remarkable development and became autonomous by becoming rapidly concentrated and rationalized. It was in this sector, and specifically in the production of ignition devices, that Robert Bosch made his fortune. In 1913, he already employed 4,700 workers in Stuttgart and in other minor establishments. This sector, which allowed pre-war German machine industry to achieve a leading world position, had an exceptionally skilled labor force. It employed many specialized technicians, it had reasearch and development expenditures higher than elsewhere, and developed an extremely dynamic marketing apparatus. Consequently, wages were higher. Bosch was the first German company to introduce the eight-hour work day in 1906 and the free Saturday in 1910 as employer's concessions. It was at this time that Germany witnessed the development of industrial sectors such as light machinery, precision tools, optics, and electromechanics. If we follow the history of the firms engaged in these sectors we see

---

*This article appeared originally in Italian in *Operai e Stato* (Milan, 1972), pp. 13-46. English translation is by Bruno Ramirez.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them making remarkable leaps forward: these are the same firms which built the international reputation for the extremely high quality of German products, and thus succeeded in meeting the financially stronger British and American competition. This was not necessarily due to the entrepreneurial ability of individual German capitalists. Rather, it was a result of the remarkable professional ability of a skilled labor force working with the most advanced technology and special tools, and directly concerned with the modification of work systems. *In this sector* the predominant figure was that of the worker-inventor, or even of the worker collaborating very closely with technicians and planning engineers. The result of this situation in Germany was the success of the tool and machine industry. Thus, whereas German agriculture and the textile industry were going through recession and crisis, Germany was producing the best agricultural and textile machinery in the world.

Let us examine the workers employed in these highly dynamic sectors: their metal work demanded utmost precision, they directly participated in changing the structure of the product and transforming their own techniques. This is what produced the success of sectors such as the German aircraft industry which in 1913 was considered the world's leader. Thus, it seems natural to find in those sectors a whole series of paternalistic initiatives and company policies such as higher wages, shorter working hours, and even profit-sharing (workers' claims Western German employers were to reintroduce between 1950 and 1965). Individual capitalists were forced to pay in order to maintain stable skilled and specialized work forces. They favored the crystallization of professional aristocracies and sought to reduce as much as possible the mobility of their labor force, especially within the same sector. Later, some of these industries were greatly stimulated by the war. Thus, e.g., Zeiss of Jena and the other great optic company, Leitz, grew as a result of government contracts for the production of all aiming instruments, while Bosch did the same in the production of generators and electromagnetic equipment needed by modern military gadgetry. Optical industries were mainly located in Wuerttemburg and in Saxony, while light machine took and electromechanic industries concentrated gradually around Berlin.

It is no mere coincidence that the workers-councils movement acquired the most marked political and managerial characteristics precisely in those three regions where the machine tool, electromechanic and optical industries, were more concentrated, i.e., where highly specialized workers were predominant within the overall labor force.[1] These highly specialized workers of the machine and tool industry with a high level of professional ability, engaged in precision work, perfectly familiar with tools (both manual and mechanic) and working alongside technicians and engineers in modifying the working process, were *materially* most susceptible to a political-organizational project such as the workers-councils, i.e., workers' self-management of production. The concept of workers' self-management could not have had such a wide appeal in the German

1. We must not forget the Hamburg region, the other focal center of the workers-councils movement, where the same type of worker predominated in the ship-building industry which later became a war industry.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

workers-councils movement without the presence of a labor force inextricably linked to the technology of the working process, with high professional values and naturally inclined to stress their function as "producers". The concept of self-management pictured the worker as an autonomous producer, and the factory's labor-power as self-sufficient. It only saw the relation between the workers and individual employers or companies, and it distrusted "politics" in its broad sense, i.e., the relationship between organization and power, party and revolution. This relation between occupational structures and determining political-ideological attitudes is well-known. It has to be emphasized both because Germany provides the most substantial illustration, and as a reminder to those who love confused and inconclusive discussions of "class consciousness", as if the latter were a spiritual or cultural fact. Also, although the self-managerial element was the most significant one, it does not exhaust the phenomenon of the German councils as revolutionary praxis and planning. It only constitutes its most typical feature.

Another feature of the German movement, directly linked to the first, was the nearly total adherence of technicians to it. In this case also the material position of the labor force within the machine industry led to a specific political choice. At that time, technicians and engineers were not yet the functionaries of the scientific organization of exploitation, since Taylorism was adopted in Germany only in the post-war period. Yet, German companies in general had a high-level administrative-bureaucratic form of organization. The German industrial boom preceeding World War I was due primarily to two objective conditions: the employment of the most advanced technology and research (the number of patents accumulated was enormous), and the extreme efficiency of the bureaucratic-administrative apparatus. This was made possible by the existence of basic infrastructures such as the organization of professional education much more advanced and well-articulated than that of other countries, a close connection between university research and industrial applications, a tradition of administrative efficiency typical of Prussian bureaucracy – both before and after Bismarck – which during the pre-World War I period of the industrial boom spread to the company level. On the basis of reports written by engineers for the workers-councils movement and published in its press, we know that the administrative-bureaucratic organization of German companies was very efficient. During the same period there occurred a higher increase in the employment of white collar than blue collar workers.

Traditionally, German bureaucracy had always been a faithful executor of orders from above. This remained true in the executive position of the technically conditioned technico-clerical labor force. In addition to its material position, the machine industry of that time produced a kind of homogeneity of the whole labor force in the company which at the proper moment (and for a short time) transformed itself into a political unity. Within the described type of enterprise it is absurd to look for a managerial class with decision-making powers located between the owners and the working class. Although extremely dynamic, from this viewpoint German machine industry had a "backward" structure with respect to the stage of industrial and technological development represented by Fordism, i.e., by the mass-production industry of consumer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

goods. That labor force characterized by high professional values and that advanced enterprise with its technical structure, did not constitute at all the vangard of capitalist industrial organization. A remarkably authoritative testimony of this comes from Henry Ford himself, who, in his autobiography, scorns that type of machine enterprise claiming that, when he was about to introduce the conveyer-belt and the assembly line, the machine industry represented the sector most static, backward, and unresponsive to the changes taking place in the organization of productive process and in the organic composition of capital. By resisting Ford's innovations, the German machine industry expressed an all-out defense of a particular kind of labor force, and therefore of a particular kind of "labor aristocracy". This resistance was equally put up by individual employers, technicians as well as workers. This middle-size machine enterprise which kept coming up with new products and, after more or less long periods of experimentation and planning, was beginning to embark in serial production (but not mass production), was to be swept away by Fordism precisely in its fundamental labor-component. Ford's innovations did not amount to mere qualitative changes of machinery but, in the long run, they meant the progressive extinction of the type of worker bound to the machine, to the factory and to the craft. The highly skilled worker of the machine industry was to give way tc the unskilled, uprooted, highly mobile and interchangeable modern assembly-line worker. Thus, it is important to keep in mide that before the German "labor aristocracy" became the "revolutionary vangard", before it underwent the acid-test, it had already been objectively doomed to extinction by the capitalist vangards.

Fordism not only replaced the craftsman, or the "labor aristocracy", with the mass-production worker by profoundly transforming the internal structure of the labor force: it has also considerably altered both the structure and the labor (and capitalist) conception of wages. Whereas for Taylor wages were incentives directly linked to the position of the single worker in the enterprise according to the individualistic and atomistic approach typical of Taylorian philosophy, for Ford wages became the general rate of income to be used in conjunction with the dynamics of the system. It became the general rate of capital to be injected within a framework of planned development. In 1911, Ford's ideas were the bright innovations of a single entrepreneur. It took the threat of a general overthrow of factory power relations, i.e., the threat of the workers-councils to collective capital, for them to become the strategy of collective capital, or the Keynesian "income revolution". This threat was not a result of the fact that the concrete projects of a new industrial order were particularly advanced, or that the workers-council movement was based primarily on the labor aristicracy, i.e., provoked the failure of planned class integration into the system. The threat was due to the fact that it was an international class movement. It was due to the fact that the working class as a whole attempted for the first time in history to reverse the trend in the process of capitalist development in the backward as well as in the advanced sectors, at the plant as well as the social level. It was not its organizational, political-ideological, or sociological character, but its international nature that constituted the revolutionary feature of the workers-councils movement. It was a world-wide 1905 in which only the weakest link

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

broke.

In order to politically reconstruct the workers-councils movement, we must follow the cycles of international labor struggles as well as the class composition within capitalism. Let us return to the German illustration. The discussion concerning the structure of the technically skilled work force and its geographical distributionis absolutely inadequate and runs the risk of becoming incorrect and misleading unless we first investigate the political class composition in Germany. Capital backwardness does not necessarily mean backwardness in the working class. If in analyzing political struggles we retain the usual distinction between advanced (U.S., England, Germany) and backward capitalist countries (Russia, Italy), we run the risk of generating confusion and schematism. From the viewpoint of subjective organization, the nature of the struggles in Russia are as advanced as elsewhere – if not more. While in the periods 1904-06, 1911-13, and 1917-20, we face a highly unbalanced capital in advanced and backward areas, we witness an extremely homogeneous political class activity in all countries. Thus, we can speak of a series of international *cycles of struggle* beginning in the 1904-06 period. The specific traits of this first cycle are very clear, even if it is difficult to chronologically locate it. It is the mass strike resulting in violent and insurrectional actions. This is best exemplified in the U.S. Starting in 1901, a series of violent mass strikes shakes the whole U.S. industrial structure. With its center, its class pole, located with the Rocky Mountain miners, these struggles spread primarily among steel, textile, and transportation workers, but, above all, construction workers. In 1905, at the peak of the cycle, while the Soviets were coming into being in Russia, in the U.S. the International Workers of the World (IWW) was formed: the most radical proletarian organization ever in the U.S., the only revolutionary class organization before the rise of the Afro-American movement. Today, there is much to be said and learned from the IWW. Although many of its militants were anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists who had migrated from Eastern and Western Europe, the IWW cannot be liquidated as the American parallel of French anarcho-syndicalism.

What was so extraordinarily modern in the IWW? Although it was based on an old class nucleus, the Western Federation of Miners, the merit of the IWW was that it attempted to organize the American proletariat in terms of its intrinsic characteristics. It was primarily an immigrant proletariat and, therefore, a mixture of ethnic groups which could only be organized in a certain way. Secondly, it was a mobile proletariat: thus, it was not only completely against identification with any specific task or skill but it was also against any link with individual factories (even if only to take them over). The IWW succeeded in concretely individuating the concept of social factory, and thus it sought to exploit the extraordinary level of communication and coordination allowed by a mobility-based struggle. The IWW succeeded in creating an absolutely original type of agitator: not the mole digging for decades within the single establishment or proletarian neighborhood, but a type of agitator who swims within the stream of proletarian struggles, moves from one end to the other of the enormous American continent and calculates the seismic wave of the struggle, thus succeeding in overcoming state boundaries and sailing the oceans before

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

organizing conventions to found sister organizations. The Wobblies' concern with transportation workers and longshoremen, their constant determination to strike at capital as an international market, their perceiving of the mobile proletariat – today employed, tomorrow unemployed – as a virus of social insubordination, as the agent of the "social wildcat": all these things make the IWW a class organization anticipating present forms of struggle, and yet completely independent from the traditions of both the Second and the Third International. The IWW is the direct link from Marx's First International to the post-communist era.

The violence and continuity of the American strikes during the first two decades of the century show how politically correct Marx's intuition was thirty years earlier to move the headquarters of 'his' International to New York. It is difficult to locate the culmination point of these struggles. Yet, the trajectory of this cycle is roughly analogous to the European one and to that of the Russian proletariat. Memorable remains the 1905 struggoe of 5,000 teamsters in Chicago resulting in clashes with the police and the cost of 20 deaths and 400 woulded. In 1904, Italy's first general strike also took place.[2] On January 3, 1905, the Putilov factory workers striked and the Russian revolution of 1905 began.[3] During the first months of that year the great strike of the German miners broke out in the Bruchstrasse mine and spread throughout the Ruhr. Prior to this struggle in Germany there had been the strikes of textile and paper workers during 1903 and 1904. These involved workers laboring under the worst conditions and receiving the worst wages. In the paper industry there had been the highest percentage of disability owing to work accidents and the famous German labor unions were nearly absent from among paper and textile workers: these workers obtained their first contract only in 1919, after the overthrow of the monarchy. The strike had broken out spontaneously, in the same way as with the miners' strike of 1905.

In the class composition of pre-war Germany the Ruhr miners represented the most advanced sector. This working class nucleus was perhaps the only one able to set in motion the whole social fabric when it entered into struggle. Typical, in this respect, had been the spontaneous and sudden 1889 strike which immediately turned into a mass strike. Already then the unions had moved in at the last moment. The Kaiser and Bismarck had to intervene directly in order to put an end to the struggle in the face of the unions' contractual and organizational inability, and the stubborn resistance put up by the coal barons. The miners had forced the employers to accept all of their demands, except the most important one, i.e., the eight-hour day including the time to and from the

2. For an excellent account of this, see Giuliano Procacci's article in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, n. 17.

3. For a masterful analysis of this struggle, see Rosa Luxemburg, "The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions", in Mary Alice Waters, ed., *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (New York, 1970), pp. 155-218; and Lenin's 1917 Zurich commemorative address, "Lecture on the Russian Revolution of 1905", in *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1964), vol. 23, pp. 236-253, in addition to contemporary writings and those immediately following the events, with the first notes concerning urban guerilla warfare.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tunnels. In fact, the 1905 struggle started precisely with this demand. As a result of constant extraction, the mines had become deeper and the time needed to go down and come up had doubled.

The mining crisis had forced about 9,000 miners to leave the district, mining illness had greatly increased but, most of all, the miners did not tolerate the presence of bosses. After the great blows of 1889 which had been especially costly at the organizational level (only 40% of the miners were union members), the union initially sought to localize the struggle. But the strike spread rapidly: after 10 days 220,000 miners were striking, out of a total of 270,000 in that district. The demands had been rejected by the barons with their usual arrogance. What was not tolerated was the questioning of the principle "here I am the boss" (*Herr-im-Hause Standpunkt*). The German miners' strike set the pace for the great struggles of the workers-councils' period. Two things stand out: the non-violence of the struggle (even the bourgeois press praised the orderly behavior of the workers), and the demands regarding power relations in the work place. The extreme sociality of the struggle in Russia, Italy, and the U.S. corresponded to demands still directed to individual capitalists or groups of capitalists in a given sector. What this meant was that the German miners had to challenge class power first and foremost at the place of production, i.e., even in the most advanced class-pole we encounter the same characteristic of anchoring subversive activity to the place of production. It is interesting to notice that, once again, the real counterpart was the government represented by the secretary of state Count von Posadowsky. A faithful follower of Bismarck and of his 'state socialism', the Count immediately enacted legislative measures which substantially met the miners' demands concerning working hours, and instituted "Labor Committees" in mines employing more than 100 people. This institution preceeded by a very short time similar "Internal Committees" in Italy. In the Government's whole behavior it is easy to discern characteristics which reappear later. In Germany the interests of collective capital were protected by the state or, in 1918, by social-democracy. In 1905 the initiative of introducing labor representation in the factory came from capital. It was a far cry from anything like co-management: they were merely organisms meant to deal with local disputes to prevent them from erupting in overt struggles which may have eventually led to a general struggle. Similarly under revolutionary pressures, the social-democratic coalition government in 1920 was to intervene against projects of socialization meant to yield all power in the factories to the workers-councils with the law of the *Betriebsraete*.[4]

The Ruhr strike did not close the period of the mass strikes in Germany: in January 1906 a general political strike paralyzed Hamburg's factories and harbor – a strike which Luxemburg defined as the "general test of the insurrection".[5] In the hears following 1905, however, a whole series of sectors

4. The prerogatives of the *Betriebsraete* can be compared to the *comitati paritetici* introduced in the Italian machine industry after the 1966 contracts.

5. We have dealt at some length with the miners' strike to indicate the most advanced class pole in pre-war Germany. Unfortunately, we have not been able to use statistics dealing with specific industrial sectors in order to reconstruct the whole German class composition in relation to the movements in struggle. Some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

underwent expansion and the overwhelming presence of the 200,000 miners from the Ruhr was balanced primarily through the creation of massive industrial centers in the Berlin region, in the Leipzig-Dresden-Chemitz triangle, in Wuerttemberg, as well as in the proximity of the ports of Hamburg, Kiel, and Bremen. Thus, in the third crucial cycle of struggles of the 1917-20 period, these other class-poles would begin the struggle, first Berlin and the ports, then Saxony, and finally the Ruhr.

Turning again from the political class composition to the structure of the labor force, it must be emphasized that the Ruhr miners and the skilled machine workers shared a very important common element, especially in terms of the problems of the modification of the organic composition of capital and in the innovative process necessary to capitalist development. Mine labor was not easily mechanizable. It was unthinkable that in a brief period a technical solution such as mechanization could drastically transform the occupational structure of mining both in the short and in the long run. In other words, the coal-steel barons realized that they *had* to live with those workers for, given the situation of full employment, they could not replace them with workers of a different type: thus, a Fordist solution in the mine and in the steel industry was not easily applicable. Similarly, the machine industry employers *wanted* to keep their own workers and were inclined towards paternalistic solutions, in order to create islands of privilege, both from normative and a wage viewpoint. Both the authoritarian and arrogant barons of the coal-steel sector, and the enlightened and paternalistic employers of the machine sector, could not plan on a short or long run labor policy different from the one they were following. In other words, the particular level of development of the two sectors posed very rigid

---

absolute figures on the strikes can at least confirm the statement that the 1904-06 period represents a distinct cycle of struggles: in 1903 there were 1,347 strikes, 86,000 strikers, with 7,000 factories involved; in 1904 there were 1,870 strikes, with 113,000 strikers, and 10,000 factories involved. In 1905 there were 2,400 strikes, with 400,000 strikers, affecting 14,000 factories; in 1906 the number of strikes was 3,000, the number of strikers was 270,000, and the factories involved 16,000; in 1907 there were 2,200 strikes, with 190,000 strikers, and with 13,000 factories involved. The following year all these figures are reduced by two thirds. It is interesting to note how things went in the 1905-06 years: compared to 1905, 1906 does not include the solid mass of 200,000 strikers from the Ruhr; yet, the number of strikes increases by 30% and the number of factories involved by approximately 13%. Similarly, in 1907: while compared to 1905 the number of strikers has decreased by approximately 52%, the number of strikes decreased only 8% and the number of factories involved also decreased by 8-9%. What this means is that the struggle had spread from the great class pole represented by the Ruhr miners into middle-size factories, thus affecting the whole social fabric of German capital. It was the initial thrust generated by the miners which put in motion the mechanism of struggle even in the machine factories of the labor aristocracy and of golden paternalism. The overwhelming presence of 200,000 Ruhr miners in the German political class-composition and the overwhelming presence of the coal-steel sector within Germany's industrial geography can be compared to FIAT's position in Italy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

limitations which severely conditioned the capitalists' freedom to maneuver. These employers could have modified all other aspects of capitalist politics such as improve the financial structure of their enterprises, accelerate concentration, improve the technical structure and the technologies used, find new markets, create new products, cooperate with unions and the government, show more entrepreneurial dynamism, favor or oppose an external social-democratic collaboration with the government, etc. Even if they had done all of this, however, they could not have made any substantial alterations in the structural nature of the labor power. This is very important because it shows how the rigidity of the German industrial system was one of the elements which rendered the overall labor power an independent variable such as to constitute, through its mere objective permanence, serious threat to further capitalist development in Germany.

The above is meant to correct the interpretation which, starting from the reformist character of the self-management project of the councils, seeks to deny the struggles' real revolutionary import, except in terms of a revival of capitalist development. If the argument is theoretically correct, and it is possible to draw conclusions from it concerning workers' struggles, the historical corrections or, better, the historical determination of that argument leads us to conclude that the post-war movement was of a subversive character. A labor organization which merely reiterated the structure of the collective labor force in the factory, dealt with workers only in their position and function as producers, merely sought to keep workers as they were within the factory in its global demands, would have turned out to be a deadly organization for German capital: ultimately it would have blocked its possibility of maneuver by taking away from the system the element of flexibility so crucially needed for rescuing capitalist development through a modification of the organic composition of capital. This type of bottle-neck was precisely what confronted Italian capitalism before fascism in almost the same terms. Thus, the revolutionary import of a movement must be calculated on the basis of the historically determined stage of development in a specific situation. German capital's impossibility to change in a short period of ten or twenty years the structure of the labor-force, the wage structure and the organic composition of capital, confronted it with a lack of choices and alternatives which translated into an inability to find alternative political solutions even before the 1918 revolutionary wave or, better, of solutions obtained through mere economic means of development, or through a reformist outcome of the labor struggle. Why did even a social-democratic organizational outcome such as the workers-councils turn out to be impossible in Germany? Why was German social-democracy unable to find a reformist solution to the political crisis of the system and had to present itself as a mere tool of repression of the struggles and of the workers-councils organizations? Why in 1918 did German social-democracy have to abandon Kautsky and choose Noske? The pair of social-democracy and repression, i.e., the social-Fascist solution, was the adequate answer to such a high level of subversive struggle. To clarify things, let us examine the solutions adopted by the American ruling class after the crisis generated by the 1904-05 struggles. One of the elements which greatly favored the victorious capitalist answer in the U.S. was the radical transformation in the occupational and labor-force structure. From 1905 to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1914 the U.S. received no less than 10 million immigrants. It is easy to imagine what this mass of subproletarians meant in terms of labor reserves and occupational structures. The half-million foreign workers present in Germany (mostly Italian and Polish) is very little compared to this amount. Here, we can see the import of Ford's genius as well as the strategic result of his projects on advanced mechanization and on the organization of wages in relation to consumption. But the Fordist solution merely rendered violent counter-revolution unnecessary in the U.S. as the only way out. Through a massive modification in the organic composition of capital, Fordism was also able to bring about a major change in the occupational structure of the labor-power. The assembly-line worker at Ford was very different from the skilled worker in the German machine industry. His very interchangeability (he could have been an Italian just landed and still unable to say "wage" in English) led him to despise that attachment to the individual factory still typical of the social figure that in Germany gave life to the workers-councils movement under the assumption that self-management was sufficient to create the socialist society. Thus, in Germany the situation was different. The rigidity of the system reduced the margins of maneuver and even Bernsteinian social-democracy represented an objective danger before the war. The latter, rather than the Kaiser's "authoritarianism", was the reason why it was not coopted by the government before the war. These bottle-necks within the system forced German capital to intensify the already inherent tendency toward aggressive expansion in foreign markets in order to overcome the crisis, thus giving rise to those intercapitalist conflicts so well described by Lenin in his pamphlet on imperialism. If the SPD wanted to join the government it had to reject any intermediate solution and totally accept social-imperialism. This occurred in 1914, with the approval of the war credits by the social-democratic group. But even in this, things are not as simple as they are made out by the official historiography of the labor movement with its theme on the social-democratic "betrayal".[6]

---

6 After this summary analysis of 1905 with reference to the key aspects of the international working class, little remains to be said about the cycle of struggles of the 1911-13 period. The same nuclei initiate the struggle and put into motion the working class in the various countries. Just to recall a few dates: 1911, strike of the coal miners in West Virginia, and the memorable struggle of the textile workers in Lawrence (even then there was a repressive wave against IWW militants); April 4, 1912, massacre of the precious metal miners of Lena, in Russia; in June of that year, Lenin wrote his article on the Russian "revolutionary renewal"; in 1912, the third mass strike of the Ruhr miners in Germany.

This time the struggle took place in a moment of great activity and after the steel and coal barons had signed an agreement committing the individual capitalist to refuse employment for four years to any worker who had been fired for politico-disciplinary reasons by other employers in the same sector. In Germany, from 155,000 strikers in 1910, we have 400,000 in 1912, and 250,000 in 1913. This is the period when workers make the utmost use of labor unions. Trade union membership jumps from 1,800,000 in 1910 to 2,300,000 in 1912. It was the highest figure since the turn of the century. But the workers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Theoretical Discussion in the International Labor Movement

The decade at the turn of the century was a period of intense and passionate theoretical debate within the international labor movement. Obviously, it is impossible here to deal with every central theme. We will only isolate a few, and particularly those connected with the discussion and political planning of the workers-council movement: the relationship between spontaneity and leadership, between tactics and strategy, and the relationship between labor unions and the party. These are the themes around which the battle raged among the three great currents of the labor movement: the revisionist, the revolutionary, and the anarcho-syndicalist. Having dealt mainly with the struggles in Russia, Germany, and the U.S., we will only touch upon the thought of Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg, Daniel DeLeon and Lenin. It is to be remembered that almost all the fundamental works on these problems were written *before* the Russian revolution of 1905.

In a series of articles in *Neue Zeit* and in his main work *Evolutionary Socialism*, Bernstein touched upon a very important point. He maintained that the clash between capital and labor had to be seen in terms of relationship between wages and profits. From this correct observation he drew a series of consequences which led the labor movement to lose the class perspective concerning the seizure of power. It is impossible to understand why his works generated so much turmoil unless we recall that his starting point was correct. From it Bernstein drew two consequences: 1) that labor struggles, conceived as economic struggles, dominated political struggles so that unions were above the party and the forms of struggle had to exclude mass demonstration in order to operate within the domain of concrete bargaining disputes; and 2) that the political struggle had to deal exclusively with the growth of the economic power of the labor-force and was to be restricted to creating an institutional framework for this growth. Bernstein's position lost sight of the final goal of socialism and left untouched existing power structures. Yet, it went beyond the fatalism, determinism and mechanism typical of previous Second International positions. Bernstein's position was "economism" as a general theory of the class movement. Precisely because of this, however, it entailed a dynamism and a possibility for immediate application which were immediately seen by the leaders of the large German labor organizations who appropriated them by side-stepping the hesitations of the party's high priests (Kautsky) and their

---

used the union without making any fetish out of the organization. By way of illustration, in 1911, the number of steel workers that were members of the socialist union was 133,000; an increase of 40,000 from 1910. But the number of members who in 1912 left the union was as high as 67,000, i.e., a negative mobility of 75%. Three fourths of the members were new members. These figures must be quoted in order to demystify the legend of the fetishism of the German workers toward organization: for each member who remained, three left. Moreover, with 133,000 members, the steel-workers' union organized only 25% of the labor force employed in that sector, while in 1905, it organized 7%. If we look at the large number of strikes in those same years, we soon realize that the great majority of these struggles were spontaneous.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reservations with departures from the orthodoxy. Because of the weight that German organizations carried within the Second International, this immediate acceptance by trade unionists gave Bernstein's doctrines an immediate popularity and diffusion, even if in some countries the unions were strongly influenced by anarcho-syndicalist theories which, at any rate, shared with Bernsteinism the rejection of "party" organization, or its overcoming. The official separation of the German unions from social-democracy occurred in 1903. Actually, it was nothing but a matter of the unions declaring themselves autonomous from the party. Clearly, for the revolutionaries, the political element or the importance of the "politicizing" factor in labor struggles became fundamental in challenging Bernstein. It was necessary to reintroduce a strategic vision and at the same time formulate a type of organization or a center of decision which could firmly hold together tactics and strategy. This, however, had to emphasize spontaneity as a challenge to the trade unions' institutional possibilities of controlling the struggling process in individual actions (daily tactics) and in its overall line. But to mention spontaneity was tantamount to appeal to a term which had been the battle-cry of anarcho-syndicalism. It was necessary to free the term "spontaneity" of its anarchic content, and the term "politics" of its bureaucratic and unmilitant connotation. By then, not only union leaders but also social-democratic party leaders were beginning to accept Bernstein's perspective. Above all, it was necessary to talk about the workers not as labor power, but as an autonomous political class. It was difficult to win this theoretical-political debate in terms of majorities in party organizations or in terms of better polemical argumentations. What was needed was a crucial political event (*Fatto di classe*) to throw on the scale, and for all revolutionaries 1905 was precisely that: the perspective of victory over revisionism.

The first revolutionary answers to Bernstein come before 1905. They begin with Luxemburg and her 1898 pamphlet "Reform or Revolution?" which defines once and for all the unions' specific field of activity and its institutional domain. According to Rosa Luxemburg, such activity "is limited essentially to efforts [aiming] at regulating capitalist exploitation" according to market conditions and "can in no way influence the process of production itself".[7] Yet, she emphasizes how the unions' economic activity could lead to a choking of capitalist development, thus laying the premises for a crisis of the system. It is at this point that political and socialist class-struggle must be undertaken anew with fresh vigor. Concerning the relationship between wages and profits, this is what Luxemburg says: "The fact is that trade unions are least able to create an economic offensive against profit. Trade unions are nothing more than the organized *defense* of labor power against the attacks of profit. They express resistance offered by the working class to the oppression of capitalist economy."[8] The struggle between wages and profits "does not take place in the blue of the sky. It takes place within the well-defined framework of the law of wages. The law of wages is not shattered but applied by trade-union activity."[9]

---

7. Mary Alice Waters, ed., *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, op.cit.*, p. 50.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 71. The other important point touched upon by Luxemburg

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As important as Luxemburg's argument was in demystifying and unmasking Bernstein's theories, like all purely demystificatory arguments, it left out too much: it was essentially negative and not reconstructive. Rosa understood that Bernsteinism had precipitated into a crisis both the revolutionary line as well as the theory of the party. One of Bernstein's most successful slogans was that "the party is nothing, the movement is everything". In the context in which it had been developed, this slogan meant the abandonment of a rigidly structured party to a party of opinions. Yet, this slogan had the merit of forcing the organization to face the problem of re-examining its relation to mass movements by abandoning fetishist deviations caused by internal party life. Bernstein introduced a dynamic element in party life and in the bureaucratic planning of a self-sufficient organizational growth. Another one of his favored slogans was "long live economics, down with politics", very reminiscent of the French anarcho-syndicalist slogan *"méfiez-vous des politiciens!"* Rosa Luxemburg felt that her criticism of the SPD line and of unions could lend support to theories aiming at eliminating the party, or any party, old or new. Although well masked, this would have added a revisionist version of the anarcho-syndicalist notion of spontaneism. On the other hand, she was unwilling to renounce either her critique of bureaucracy of her positive evaluation of spontaneity. But, wasn't it the case that her anti-bureaucratic polemics seemed to support those who criticized party organization and politics as such? Wasn't it the case that her positive evaluation of spontaneity seemed to support anarchic spontaneism?

Consideration of this type led Luxemburg to propose an intermediate solution, which led her to what Lenin defined as the theory of the "organization-as-a-process" and of "tactics-as-a-process". In fact, in her 1904 article "Organizational Problems of Russian Social-democracy", she reiterated the idea that the masses go beyond the party[10] while at the same time emphasizing how not everything of the old organization was to be thrown out.[11] In elaborating her politico-organizational line Luxemburg had to take into account the conditions within which a revolutionary current would have

---

concerns the relationship between political struggle and the struggle for democracy: "the socialist labor movement is the *only* support for that which is not the goal of the socialist movement – democracy . . . The socialist movement is not bound to bourgeois democracy, but on the contrary, the fate of democracy is bound with the socialist movement." *Ibid.*, p. 76.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 121: "the insignificant role played by the initiative of central party organs in the elaboration of actual tactical policy can be observed today in Germany and other countries. In general, the tactical policy of the social democracy is not something that may be 'invented'. It is the product of a series of great creative acts of the often spontaneous class struggle seeking its way forward. The unconscious comes before the conscious. The logic of the historical process comes before the subjective logic of the human being who participate in the historic process. The tendency is for the directing organs of the socialist party to play a conservative role."

11. *Ibid.*, p. 128: "social democracy already contains a strong, politically educated proletarian nucleus class conscious enough to be able, as up to now in Germany, to pull along in its path the declassed and petty bourgeois elements that join the party."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had to move in Germany, i.e., a "boring-from-within" approach inside the SPD. Thus, her sociological efforts aim at locating that stratum of grass-roots cadres in the party which, owing to their origin and their preparation, could better learn the lesson of spontaneity and understand trends and directions of the struggles taking place outside or independently of the organization. Only a new revolutionary explosion would have cleared the situation within the party. In fact, it is not accidental that some of the reservations in her 1904 position are dropped in 1906, the year in which she wrote "The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions" giving her analysis of the 1905 Russian-Polish mass strikes. There, she poses the most important problem concerning their direction and organization. Her proposals, however, are still too general.[12] They are essentially norms for the maintenance of a correct relation with spontaneity. They include no precise indications on how to organize and direct spontaneity. Once again, Rosa finds herself caught between the sociology of organization and the theory of the party.[13] The direction still remains with the factory-based party cadres. In fact, in her analysis of the Russian strikes, she quotes with emphasis the report of the Petersburg unions as a model of organization-direction. These limitations in Luxemburg's thought must not obscure the fact that almost all the workers and youth cadres which gave life to the workers-councils movement had found their fundamental practical-theoretical orientation in her works. For the workers and intellectuals of the new generation who had just joined the party, the 1905 Russian experience was crucial. The SPD's "left" exerted a strong influence on them, both through the leadership role played by Karl Liebknecht in the youth organization – which later became such a center of dissention that it had to be dissolved – and through Rosa's prominent position in the central school for cadres.

Another important point in Luxemburg's 1906 essays is the final analysis she gave of German class composition which, not accidentally, started with the miners, i.e., with what she calls *the misery of the miners.* In emphasizing the sociality of the struggle in the mass strikes, she points out the importance of the political unification between working class, poor proletariat, and sub-proletariat. Since for Lenin spontaneity was the lowest and not, as in Luxemburg's case, the highest level of struggle from which to begin a discussion concerning political organization, the author of *What is to be Done?* found himself already beyond a whole series of problems in which Rosa had remained entangled. Without undertaking here a detailed analysis of Lenin's pamphlet, we will merely outline some essential points necessary to understand the profound diversity between Bolshevism and the workers-councils movement.

---

12. Thus, she writes: "the social democrats are called upon to assume *political* leadership in the midst of the revolutionary period." In *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, op.cit.*, p. 189. And: "the tactics of the social democrats are decided according to their resoluteness and acuteness and they never fall below the level demanded by the actual relations of forces, but rather rise above it – that is the most important task of the directing body in a period of mass strikes."

13. Thus she writes: "the resolution and determination of the workers also play a part and indeed the initiative and the wider direction naturally fall to the share of the organized and most enlightened kernel of the proletariat." *Ibid.*, p. 188.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A) Since every organizational discussion is subordinated to the political line, Lenin begins by requesting a re-evaluation of theory in order to sidestep the pitfalls of "empiricist activism". Thus, he underlines as precisely as possible the line of demarcation between Bernsteinism or economism and the revolutionary hypothesis. Finally, he tackles the problem of the relationship between leadership and spontaneity and accuses economism of submitting to spontaneous struggles.

B) Following Kautsky's formulation, he sees bourgeois intellectuals as having the task of bringing social-democratic consciousness from the outside since it does not arise spontaneously among the working masses, whose natural tendency is toward trade-unionism.[14]

Starting with Engels' definition of the economic and trade-union struggles as "resistance against capitalism", Lenin outlines the institutional boundaries between the union and the party. The union is to struggle against the individual capitalist in a given sector, while "Social-Democracy represents the working class not in its relation to a given group of employers, but in its relation to all classes in modern society, to the state as an organized political force."[15] Thus, the tasks of political agitation and denunciation must not only be extended to workers' economic struggle, but to all possible domains.

D) Terrorism is also a mistake since it does not contribute in any way to the political organization and direction of spontaneity but, rather, it explicitly renounces them.

E) Lenin seems to deal most extensively with the technical aspects of clandestine organization and with the "primitivism" of Russian Social-Democracy. He stresses primarily what he considers the specifically political aspect, in contraposition to agitation and intervention in labor struggles which are only parts of it – even if the most "essential" ones, and suggests a kind of articulated and multi-faceted party activity similar to that of German social-democracy.

F) The relevance of *What Is To Be Done?* resides in the extreme frankness with which Lenin tackled problems such as the function of intellectuals and workers.[16] Although Lenin does not explicitly state it in this

---

14. Thus, he writes: "we have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the 'new tendency' in Russian Social-Democracy lies in its subservience to spontaneity ... The spontaneous rise of the masses in Russia proceeded ... with such rapidity that the young untrained Social-Democrats proved unfitted for the gigantic tasks tnat confronted them ... Revolutionaries, however, *lagged* behind this rise of the masses in both their 'theories' and their practical activity; they failed to establish an uninterrupted organization having continuity with the past, and capable of leading the whole movement." Cf. Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (New York, 1943), p.52.

15. V.I. Lenin, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

16. Cf. V.I. Lenin, *op.cit.*, pp. 122 and 124: "Not only revolutionists, in general, but even working-class revolutionists lag behind the spontaneous awakening of the working masses ... Our very first and most imperative duty is to help to train working-class revolutionists who will be on the same level *in regard to party activity* as intellectual revolutionists ... A workingman who is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work, what is most striking is the great theoretical gap and historical backwardness of the middle-European revolutionary currents in relation to the Russian experience. In the brief outline of the history of the Bolshevik party which Lenin wrote in 1920 in *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, he indicates how already in 1902 both he and his friends watched with a certain detachment the first formulations of a new European left still entangled in questions which the Russian experience had already overcome. The tactical support given to Luxemburg cannot conceal the serious differences concerning primarily the conception of the party and the relationship between leadership and spontaneity. Up to 1918, Lenin restricted himself to reckoning with Bernsteinian opportunism. Later on, after the consolidation of Soviet power, he was able to deal with Pannekoek, Daeumig and, indirectly, with Rosa's theory of organization-as-a-process, which he once again regarded as a submission to spontaneity; as the identification of the party with spontaneous movements, and as the confusion between politicized workers, struggling workers, and professional revolutionary cadres.

G) One thing was particularly clear, i.e., that it was not sufficient for, e.g., a worker to have a correct view of the factory struggle or of the struggle that he materially organized, in order to make a professional revolutionary. It was not sufficient to reverse the social function the system assigns to the individual in production by becoming an acting minority and produce a Bolshevik cadre. On the other hand, the Luxemburgian organization represented a coordinated network of acting minorities eventually able to overthrow the reformist leadership in class organizations.

But is this all the difference between Lenin and Rosa? So far, we have reduced it to the most skeletal formal terms and we have not been able to grasp another key element of Lenin's position: i.e., that the distinction between a network of acting minorities and a network of professional revolutionaries is simply a question regarding *the historical stages of the class struggle* and therefore the different levels of development of spontaneity. It is not a question of denying the function of the acting minorities in order to favor that of the professional cadres. Rather, both must be seen as expressions of the movement's level of growth: the former as being more backward than the latter. If so, are there laws determining the movement's growth? Is it possible to formulate a scientific theory of the party? Lenin's answer to these questions was that the scientific nature of this theory is wholly a function of the degree of correctness in analyzing power relations between classes in a given historical moment. The point is not to prefer one organizational crystallization to another but of evaluating the exact level attained by the struggle and the stage of development of the party. The very distinction between mass strike, political strike, and

---

at all talented and 'promising' *must not be left* to work eleven hours a day in a factory. We must arrange that he be maintained by the party . . . The *sin* we commit is that we do not sufficiently stimulate the workers to take this path 'common' to them and to the 'intellectuals' of professional revolutionary training, and that we too frequently drag them back by our silly speeches about what 'can be understood' by the masses of the workers, by the 'average worker', etc."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

insurrectional strike is a practical example of three different levels of spontaneity, of organization of the struggle, and of power relations among classes. And if there are any laws, they are to be found in the historical experience of the proletariat: in unsuccessful revolutions. Like the construction of dikes which is always based on the highest levels reached by the tide, the science of the party must theoretically grasp all the levels of struggle and organization attained so far, in order to both regain and overcome them at the same time. Every new and more advanced level of struggle is matched by a re-organization of the capitalist system as a dialectical response to the class confrontation. Thus, the science of the party is always to be measured by means of the historical levels reached by capitalist organization. The revolutionary hypothesis seeks to theoretically anticipate those stages of the struggle which must be practically brought about. Yet, even the best hypotheses are surpassed by unforeseen levels of struggle. Such was the situation in which Lenin found himself in 1905 with the rise of the Soviets during *the soviet stage of party development* where the working class presented itself as "power". Much has been said about the polemics between Lenin and Luxemburg concerning the problem of centralization and the minority's right to dissent: in the historiography of the labor movement Luxemburg is accused of regressive democraticism, or she is exalted by anti-Stalinist groups for having anticipated the struggle against repressive and opportunistic bureaucracies. This polemic has been primarily used in a counterrevolutionary way by left-wing socialists. Perhaps, all this historiography should be thrown out in order to better grasp the meaning of Luxemburg's positions. Although strongly bound to the Russian-Polish experience, she found herself confronted with the problem of creating a revolutionary faction within a mass-based party full of possibilities such as the SPD. Rosa realized that it was impossible to wrestle the direction of labor struggles away from the opportunist politics of the SPD by merely relying on political and minority means without reversing the relationship between class and unions. She realized that within a conflictual society such as Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, this could not be done with Lenin's means. Furthermore, she was perfectly aware of the increasingly wider gap developing between "workers and politics": between the struggling proletariat and professional politicians. This was not merely a phenomenon limited to French anarcho-syndicalism. In the IWW founding convention Heywood had shouted "Everyone in the IWW! Out with the politicians!" Rosa Luxemburg realized that political organization within the working class was brought about only by the party's workers' cadres and that, in the subversive struggle, only they could have prevented a total break between complete workers' control (*operaismo tout court*) and a political direction. Only those cadres could have defeated trade-union gradualism and the opportunism of parliamentarians and salaried functionaries. But probably she did not realize that, at that point, the problem would have been to break the trade-unions rather than the party.

Like Lenin and all European politicians at the time of the Second International, Rosa considered unions sacred and repeated *ad nauseam* that even the most opportunist European unions were nevertheless "working-class" organizations and not a bunch of gangsters as Gompers' union in the U.S. Thus,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the faction that Rosa wanted to create was essentially a network of political workers' cadres closely linked to factory struggles and related in an ambiguous way to the unions. To Lenin's motto "first the party and then the revolution", she answered "first the workers' control of the party, and then the revolution". What for Luxemburg was a problem of the social composition of the party, for Lenin was a problem of program or of the party's policy. For Lenin the workers' revolutionary direction was to be attained by tying militants to this program and thus disciplining them to centralization. Rosa and Lenin spoke to two different types of working class: they spoke against two different types of reformism.

The conditions for the organization of a political labor movement in the U.S. were markedly different. It is in this light that we must evaluate DeLeon's position and the practice of the IWW. The relation between DeLeon and the IWW, however, must be preliminarily clarified. Although he was considered the ideologist of the movement and to a certain extent the one who anticipated the workers-councils organization, DeLeon actually occupied a minority position within the IWW. In fact, three years after its foundation, he was expelled from the IWW as a leader of a political party. In Detroit he founded another IWW increasingly yielding to the realities of the movement – above all in regard to the problems of the political struggle – and gradually moving away from any type of electoral approach. His fame among European revolutionary leaders, which earned him Lenin's homage after the revolution, was probably due to his approach's greater affinity with the European situation. Yet, his major "theoretical" contributions were made precisely when he rejected the approach and traditions of the Second International in order to deal with the formidable reality of the class struggle in the U.S.

It is impossible to compare the maturity of the American entrepreneurial class and its stage of productive organization with the corresponding European ones. The U.S. was faced with a gigantic input of labor power into directly productive labor. The greatest efforts were concentrated on the organization of work: all the technical tools for an efficient apparatus were already available. Humanitarian pretenses and authoritarian arrogance were altogether alien to the American capitalist class. It was a mass process not merely limited to a few industrial islands. Such a society seemed to be free of any residue of either productive or institutional backwardness. Unlike the European situation, the struggle between workers and owners, between working class and social owners, was not separated by a barrier of political institutions. An extremely high level of social cooperation, a global approach to the social division of labor, an inexhaustible ability to turn conflict into rationalization and development, a control over the labor force exerted directly by the productive apparatus free from the mediation of unionism, a political use of mass mobility: all of these things conferred upon the American system striking characteristics such as to relegate Europe to the role of an annoying province. All political and civil liberties having been reduced to the one and only capitalist freedom – the freedom to work – led to a total identification between factory and society. Consequently, there was a major reduction of the political space understood in the traditional sense of representation and mediation. And all this took place under the pressure of a frontal workers' struggle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The primitivism, superficiality, or obviousness of DeLeon's writings, so different from the pretentious chatter of so many European leaders, is a European distortion. DeLeon, and, before him, the 'labor' agitators who led the IWW, understood very well how in that situation a revolutionary political line and organization must take on specific mass characteristics and that therefore, the institutionalization of a vangard was something altogether questionable. Even less practical was a centralized direction understood as a military organization issuing orders through hierarchical channels. In fact, the relationship between direction and spontaneity was reversed since it was a question of enabling the collective worker to act automatically or, rather, autonomously. This explains the great stress on the struggle, and the contempt for ideology. This explains the program concerning the struggle as the only collective organizer engaged in a gigantic cultural revolution based on a few principles: wage and working hours, wildcat strikes, no bargaining, direct violent mass action, no tie to agitation or to the mobility of the agitators and egalitarianism.

Perhaps the difference between DeLeon's Europeanism and the IWW leaders lies entirely in his desperate search for a "political" level above and beyond the pure mass struggle. This was probably where he was beyond the others. Along with all socialist intellectuals, he had begun by conceiving of that level in terms of elections. But the bum or Wobbly answered him that that was bourgeois stuff for people with glasses and goatees. For him, who was nothing but a proletarian, politics was a power relation with the boss. No Wobbly ever bothered to think about what the future society would be like. This, however, was of great interest to DeLeon – an intellectual who wanted to know what his office would look like after taking power: this is why he fantasized so much about the future society based on the unions. This is why Gramsci mistook him for a forerunner of the workers-councils.

Terms such as party, ideology, and utopia, which were the pass-words of the Second and later the Third International, are entirely foreign to the American class struggle. They surface in DeLeon only as secondary elements, squashed by a reality of social struggle, imposed and willed by the innumerable nameless agitators who set into motion all strata of the American proletariat. In DeLeon one witnesses this gradual loss of the autonomy of theory: the extinction of a certain political level. This is an instance where the analysis of a theoretician's writings gives us less than the description of the IWW struggles.

In addition to the refusal to bargain, what is most striking in the IWW experience is the rejection of any institutionalization of the conflict, the refusal to sign contracts so to periodicize the struggle, and the refusal to consider the struggle as a factory affair seeking primarily to develop the struggle's possibilities of social communication. What it resulted in was an organization which, similar to the Italian *Camere del Lavoro*, was based on territorial principles. Yet, all this is fundamentally similar to European struggles and the workers-councils approach. This common principle is in the fact that the struggle and the organization find their base by overturning the material condition in which capital places the proletariat: in Europe by overturning workers' aristocracies into political vangards, and in the U.S. by overturning mobility into a vector of workers' organization. Why was vagrancy the main charge through which IWW

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cadres were thrown in jail? Why was the Wobbly agitator's work-style modelled on the existence of a mobile proletariat, today working in construction, tomorrow unemployed, the day after a seasonal picker, then a textile worker, or a waiter on trains? The organizers of the seasonal workers followed them in their migrations from the Mexican border to Canada. Thus, Ford's notion of a social wage originates from this proletarian approach to income which does not crystallize sectorial divisions, but has an egalitarian approach to income.

Therefore, the two pillars of the IWW organization are internationalism and egalitarianism. What is completely foreign is what we call factory-power precisely because a factory which was not the social factory was foreign to the Wobblies' world. Also foreign is any relation to skills. Thus, *before* the massification of labor was introduced by the assembly line, the mass worker was subjective reality shaped by Wobbly agitators. It was a program of total confrontation with the social factory and social capital. Unlike all European examples, the history ofAmerican struggles is probably the only one in which the workers' movement does not seek either a remodernization of productive structures nor an organization of the productive forces more backward than that of capital itself in a given stage of development. Probably, the workers' power projected by the Wobblies sought to leave the management of business to the bosses and let the working class determine socially necessary labor and income. This is why, rather than laying down a list of grievances to be dealt with at the bargaining table, they onesidedly fixed wages and working hours, write them down on a piece of paper at the factory gates, and left it to the bosses to come down and take note in order to respect it, thereby executing workers' orders. How many European workers, advised by intellectuals who claimed to be their friends and enticed by the idea of sitting behind a desk and of sending clerical workers (*impiegati*) to the benches, afterwards found themselves sitting in night-school desks after eight hours in the factory regretful for not having picked up a gun or for letting it be taken away from their hands by those very intellectuals? Besides the antiegalitarian ideology of labor, the main differences between the Wobbly's world and that of the European Bolshevik cadres lie precisely in the relationship between struggle, revolution, and power. What was missing in the IWW is precisely the conception of the revolutionas an act of management of power: the substitution of a state machine by another one. In other words, it is the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the proletarian party over society.

When did the communist model gain the upper hand over the Wobbly organization? It should be pointed out that men like Foster, future secretary of the American Communist Party, came out of the IWW and that there he began his factional struggle in connection with the discussion over centralization. But this was not yet the key point: the essential question was whether the IWW should have continued its anti-institutional practice, or whether it should have accepted the specific ground of bargaining, contractual norms, and, therefore, a more static and stable organization. In other words, the issue was whether the IWW should have become a traditional union as the first step toward a convergence with the AFL, thus creating the premise for a unified labor organization in the U.S., and leaving the door open for a specific party

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

organization. As the cycle of struggles weakened, there arose problems of defense from repression so that resistance took priority over attack and the communist model appeared as the only possible alternative. The American Communist Party succeeded in taking over a good part of the Wobbly's legacy and to integrate it in the great CIO operation of Roosevelt's period.

A final but extremely important problem is that of the relationship between the IWW and American blacks. Probably it is necessary here to go back to the period between the plantation era and the end of the Civil War in search of the vangard which brought about the first struggles in the U.S. The social figure at the center of this first cycle of insubordination is the black run-away and later the southern black miner and the black worker in the first large steel mills in Birmingham, along with the white convict laborers. Neither the Knights of Labor nor the AFL approached these proletarian strata, much less the black masses reduced to peonage by the crisis of the plantation. Capitalist repression at the turn of the century unleashed precisely against these strata. The IWW never contacted these masses precisely because the black labor power had never been free social labor power. It remained trapped in the poverty of the South and until WWII it was not allowed to flow into the great northern and eastern industrial arteries. If a black worked in a coal mine in Pennsylvania, Alabama, or Kentucky he joined the United Mine Workers. The Western Federation of Labor, from which the IWW grew, was made out of the copper and iron miners of Utah, Arizona, and Montana. Therefore, the ten million immigrants the IWW attempted to successfully organize represent for American capital the river of human flesh which separated, and had to keep separated, the Southern blacks from the northern factories. A dike of ten million white proletarians prevented the Blacks from assaulting metropolitan exploitation. The IWW is historically bound to this colossal defense effort on the part of white capital. This explains the function of the IWW revolutionary initiative within this tactical-strategic plan of U.S. capital.

War and Revolution

In August 1914, the imperialist war broke the workers' movement into three large currents: the social-democrats who advocated patriotism and class collaboration as a tactical passage towards the eventual management of society in the period of reconstruction; the revolutionary pacifist including the whole Zimmerwald movement who closed ranks on the issues of class resistance to war and superexploitation; and the Bolsheviks or, rather, Lenin and a few others, who foresaw the possibility of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. Here the Bolshevik militant took on his specific military role in the insurrection. There has always been talk about the social-democratic betrayal. Actually, it was a lucid and cynical plan of co-management between capital and unions, between the bourgeois state and the social-democratic party. Soon after having voted for war credits, the "workers representatives" in Germany created a series of joint organs, both at the plant as well as at more general levels as a first link of that chain which with the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* of 1918, was to reach for the throat of the working class in order to choke the workers-councils movement. The war

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eeded the workers' collaboration and the social-democrats became all the more patriotic and insistent in order to present themselves as an alternative political group (*ceto*). Otherwise, it is impossible to explain the rush and the determination with which employers and the social-democratic party acted after 1918, nor the violent anti-union resentment of the working-councils cadres: during the war the unions had managed and guaranteed superexploitation in the factories and had reported insubordinate workers to the police. In the post-war period, the traditional organization is assailed by a violent workers' revenge precisely in its role of political group of functionaries. The ideology of the workers-councils movement, its generic accusation of the "professional politicial", the juxtaposition of the social figure of those on salaries and of the party functionary, i.e., of the intellectual in politics, ended up by engulfing both the right as well as the left, Rosa Luxemburg was not even able to participate in the first workers' councils convention: only after long battle was she allowed in as an observer. Workers' autonomy has posed the problem of the relationship between them and the committed group of professional revolutionaries. We do not know whether the destiny of Luxemburg – expelled from the convention of those workers' cadres which her writings had to a great extend helped bring about – and Lenin was to be tied to the question of the relation between direction and spontaneity, or how much it was tied to the fact that Lenin and his group had armed the workers, while the Spartachist group had continued to view the organization as coordination and resistance, and the refusal to work as the only adequate workers' weapon. The essence of Leninism shifts from the relationship between spontaneity and the party to the relationship between the party and insurrection.

In Germany the key point is constituted by the presence of that ambiguous and contradictory formation which was the USPD: the independent social-democratic party which included Kautskians and workers-councils leaders, both Centrists and Spartachists. Unlike Liebknecht claimed, the ambiguity of the USPD did not lie in its participation in parliament (already in 1915 the Spartachist leader had insisted on the need for "extraparliamentary mass action" in the *Spartakusbriefe*), but in its mystification of workers' autonomy. The union cadres of the metal workers who organized the first strikes against the war in January 1918 were under the USPD umbrella, and it was within the USPD that the ideological battle concerning the councils movement took place.

The program is well known: the transformation of workers' autonomy into counterpower, i.e., into the democratic organization of wage workers, and the conception of the workers-councils as organs of workers democratic power founded on direct representation. This was precisely the meaning of Kautsky's socialization: the formal scheme of bourgeois democracy applied to workers' autonomy. It was essentially Daeumig's conception: workers' control of production, self-management, the building of alternate power which would *de facto* deprive the state of its power, a conception of working class power only in terms of acceptance or refusal to labor, i.e., only in terms of workers' blackmail. Lenin attacked Daeumig very harshly precisely as the theorist of mere workers' autonomy. Actually, Daeumig was the only one among the councils' leaders who wanted to reintroduce a political perspective, i.e., a tactic aiming at determining the specific passage of power relations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is a mistake to view the workers-councils movement as a workers' critique of the forms of bourgeois institutional power. This may have been its form or its ideological aspect. The true revolutionary character of the workers-councils phase in Germany lies in the workers' power to provoke the crisis and to freeze capitalist development. This was understood very well by the old foxes in Versailles. The imposition of "that" treaty on Germany was practically dictated by the need to deprive the working class of the material bases of its very existence. Those who drafted the punitive clauses toward Germany operated precisely within the domain of the dual existence of the working class, i.e., as labor power inextricably bound to the material process of accumulation and as a class irreducibly antagonistic to that development. At that time Keynes, with his "grieved" appeals, was the strategist who looked much farther and not the tactical politician who wanted above all to settle the score with the working class in the offensive. In Versailles, international capital ran on a razor's edge, and risked halting the process of accumulation in its weakest zone: Germany. It blocked the process of development of its organic composition in order to halt the growth of the labor component: it accepted the challenge of the dual character of the labor power commodity. It is in this sense that it entered the battlefield of the workers' struggle that the workers-councils movement had helped to bring about.

Capital itself destroyed the monetary form of exchange-relations: German inflation took away power in the form of wages from the hands of the class. It was the first time in history that the capitalist crisis did not take on the cyclic character but froze general development. This was the first capitalist crisis determined by the workers' impact on the process of value-creation (*valorizzazione*). The future possibilitiess (*futuribili*) of the workers-councils movement were all here. Versailles and the NEP were ultimately two parallel movements: the first was a decision of the capitalist brain meant to halt development in order to choke the growth of the class; the second was a decision of the workers' brain to stimulate development in order to reconstitute the material bases for class-growth.

Hence the defense of the institution of workers-councils was the veil that covered this deadly struggle between capital and labor. It was not difficult for the union bureaucracy to manage this defense in terms of democratization of unions. Union democracy was as much against workers' autonomy as it was a part of it. The social-democratic professional politicians' ability to "manage" was impressive. Thus, Noske, for instance, first headed Kiel's military-worker insubordinational movement by accepting the workers-councils ideology, and then he went to Berlin to organize the White Guards. The councils movement immediately found itself on the defensive from December 1918 on. No sooner were they created than the councils had to be "defended": the workers' power thrust (*carica operaistica*) and the mass critique against "politics" were essentially defensive attitudes. The SPD threw into the councils movement – the movement of new representations – all its union and party functionaries, expert in motions, conventions, and the parliamentary game. The councils picked up once again the theme of direct action after they lost the battle of majorities. Reformist politics won over the refusal to work. Old theoretical party brains such as Kautsky, Hilferding and Bernstein, were left in the USPD to sow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

confusion in the field of workers' autonomy. They were quietly left to construct the utopia of labor democracy in the same way that capital let Rathenau fantasize about similar utopias. What was missing througout the councils period was the armed power of the working class which was not merely self-defense since during the war the revolutionary cadres in the army had simply preached resistance to the war or pacificism against militarism, and at the end of the war had merely demanded the abolition of hierarchies. In Russia, on the other hand, the Bolsheviks had undertaken the task of forming a Red Army.

When union leaders and large employers formed an alliance at the end of 1918, they already had before them the complete picture of the mechanics of revolution in Russia. Thus, their first concern was organizing and managing demobilization. The worker had to leave the guns – they said – and return as soon as possible to his job. A specific program of counterrevolutionary disarmament was managed with the same pacifist ideology, on the same anti-militarist ground of the Second International and to a great extent by the Zimmerwald participants. Mass strikes were admitted but insurrection was not.

Thus, the workers-councils movement failed not on the ground of workers' management of productive labor, but on that of the relation between mass strikes and insurrection, or between refusal to work and insurrection. We keep hearing that the workers' determinination of the crisis from 1918 to 1923 prolonged the refusal to work as an ongoing crawling movement, without creating the party. Yet, without its determination of the crisis and its struggle against development, the party is not revolutionary. Thus, the failure of the workers-councils movements did not postpone the problem of the relationship between autonomy and the party of professionals, but rather that of the relationship between struggle against development and insurrection, on the one hand, and armed workers' power on the other. We have seen in more recent history how many times insurrection has been, instead, the premise for a resumption of development. Leninism is perhaps the extreme limit reached by the insurrectional level and by the class as autonomy where the party is still an acting minority.

Maoist thought has gone farther, by conceiving of the class as the party, the party as the majority of the people, the party as social majority, and by moving the ground of insurrection from the brief *coup d'etat* to long-range war. With Maoism, insurrection has become a spontaneist term.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTRODUCTION TO KOSIK'S "OUR PRESENT CRISIS"

by

Karel Kovanda and James Schmidt

Karel Kosik, along with Ivan Svitak, was the greatest philosophical influence during the "Prague Spring" of 1968. At that time Kosik taught at Charles University in the Philosophy Faculty and had written three books: *Czech Radical Democrats: A Selection of Political Essays* (1953), an anthology of writings by activists in the 1848 revolution with an introduction by Kosik; *Czech Radical Democracy: A Contribution to the History of Clashes of Opinion in the Czech Society of the 19th Century* (1958); and finally, *Dialectics of the Concrete* (1962), the work through which he is best known in the West.[1]

Dialectics of the Concrete marked the theoretical maturation of Kosik's attempts to revitalize the "western Marxist" tradition exemplified by Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* by recovering the phenomenological roots of the dialectic which remained obscured by Lukács' neo-Kantianism. In this project, Kosik was undoubtedly influenced by his teacher Jan Patocka, a non-Marxist who briefly taught courses on Heidegger and Husserl in Prague after the war and then again for a short time in 1968.[2] Through the encounter of phenomenology and Marxism Kosik developed his central categories: the problem of man,[3] man's authentic objectivation of himself in history,[4] and his reified objectification in the world of the "pseudo-concrete."[5] Unlike *History and Class Consciousness* Kosik's book never fell into the "revolutionary messianism" that distorted Lukács' inquiry, since at this point Kosik was not willing to move beyond the theoretical level and occupy himself with problems of practice and organization. The series of articles known collectively as *Our Present Crisis*[6] represent Kosik's attempt to apply the insights gained by his theoretical inquiries to the immediate crisis of Czech democracy.

The bushy-haired, thick-spectacled Kosik was by no means as eye-catching a public speaker as Svitak,[7] yet with the demands of the Prague Spring, Kosik

---

1. A translation from the Czech edition exists only in German (*Die Dialektik des Konkreten*, Suhrkamp, 1967). The German translation has been subsequently translated into French and Italian, and parts of the Italian translation have been rendered into English in *Telos* (nos. 2 and 4).
2. See Jan Patocka, "Das Prinzip des Gewissens in der Wissenschaft" in the collection *Nachrichten aus dem CSSR* (Suhrkamp), a German translation of a number of *Literarni listy* articles. A similar collection of essays translated into English exists in the hands of Grove Press. They have not, at this date, been published.
3. See Karel Kosik, "The Problem of Man", in Erich Fromm, ed. *Socialist Humanism* (Doubleday, 1965). Also see Kosik's talk with Liehm in Antonin Liehm, *The Politics of Culture* (Grove Press, 1972).
4. See Karel Kosik, "Reason and History" in *Telos* no. 3.
5. See the first section of *Dialectics of the Concrete*, translated in *Telos* no. 2.
6. "Our Present Crisis" first appeared in *Literarni listy* nos. 7-12, April-May 1968. Translations into German (in *Nachrichten aus dem CSSR*) and Italian (*La Nostra Crisi Attuale* Editori Riuniti, 1969) exist.
7. For an example of Svitak's flamboyant style see his letter to the Central Committee in the current issue of *New Politics*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entered public discourse and proved to be a powerful and effective public speaker without ever losing his calm, reasoned, attentive style. At the Czech Writers' Congress, Kosik delivered a speech defending the "unity of reason and conscience" using the example of Jan Hus, a 15th century Czech intellectual who, promised freedom if he would submit to the dictates of the church council, refused. Kosik argued that a man cannot sacrifice reason to private calculation since "to lose one's reason and conscience is to lose the very substance of humanity."[8] Kosik expanded this argument in his first appearance before a political rally in Tabor in March of 1968. Here Kosik investigated what has been called "the Czech question" ever since the historian Palacky first posed it in the 19th century: what is the inner meaning of the history of a little country in the center of Europe? What does it have to do to survive? To survive in a decent manner? The significance of the "Czech question" transcends any narrow parochialism, since Kosik sees the essence of the Czech problem contained in Hus's refusal to compromise. Thus, the meaning of Czech history is contained in the effort to "uphold what you know to be true." In the context of present Czech history, this meant the destruction of the mystifications of the pseudo-concrete in all of its manifestations, including the pseudo-socialism that is attacked in the article that has been translated here.

The essays contained in *Our Present Crisis* had their genesis in weekly discussions held in the Writer's Union Building by a group headed by Kosik called the Club for Critical Reasoning. Here Kosik investigated the pseudo-concrete representations of politics, political personality, classes and society, the "Czech question", and socialism that had led to the stagnation of public discussion. In the essay translated here Kosik attempts to separate the authentic core of socialism, its historical mission as a liberating alternative to mass society, from the inessential catch-words and ideological camouflages that constituted the pseudo-socialism of the years following the Slansky trials. This leads him to a discussion of the "scientific and technological revolution", a cliche that became popular in Prague in the "thaw" that followed Stalin's death, but which hid the meaning of socialism behind a reification as complete as any of Stalin's own efforts. Socialism, in Kosik's view, is not merely a program for controlling the economic growth of underdeveloped countries, as it became in the case of Russia. In an already developed nation, such as Czechoslovakia, its tasks are as much "philosophic" as "economic", since its primary concern is an authentic solution to the problem of human existence.

Since 1968 Kosik has suffered the hassles that all Czech intellectuals who remained in the country in hopes of carrying out the January reforms have undergone. At the time of the intervention, he had been elected to the Central Committee of the party, during the Fourteenth Extraordinary Congress which was held despite Soviet intervention. A year later, all members of the Central Committee were required to agree that the intervention was legitimate and necessary. Kosik, in a one word statement reminiscent of Hus, announced that he would not recant, and was subsequently removed from the Central Committee. In the early part of 1972, he was arrested for some time and interrogated.

8. For a description of Kosik's activities see Pavel Kohout, *From the Diary of a Counter Revolutionary* (McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 74-75 and 221-222.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OUR PRESENT CRISIS*

by

Karel Kosik

The Crisis of Socialism.

The regime that had a monument erected only to have it torn down right away, had no inclination of the true meaning of its actions, and in particular, it never realized that through its action, the metaphysics of the modern times is *exposed*: provisionalism and nihilism. What more telling way is there to depict nothingness and ephemeral transcience than by a monument which, designed to "last forever", hardly survives a few months?[1] The regime that had the statesman's corps embalmed,[2] the mummy dressed in a general's uniform, then put it into civic clothes, and finally had it cremated, had no inkling about its decision making and particularly missed the fact that through its actions, the metaphysics of the modern times is *exposed*, which lost respect to the living and to the dead because it had transformed *everything* into a subject of manipulation and thereby opened an unlimited realm for indifference and lack of taste. The regime that had communist officials executed[3] and permitted, in the evening hours of the third of December of nineteen fifty-two, that their ashes be "strewn over a road in the environs of Prague" (according to the report of the investigation committee), did not have the correct idea of its action and certainly did not suspect that through its action, the metaphysics of human existence *is bared*: the struggle of culture with animality and bestiality in man is *never* ended and every individual must always *anew* and *by himself* strive for humanity.

All of this was being done in the name of socialism.

Therefore, we have to suppose that the crisis of socialism is more profound than it appears to ideologists. In these circumstances, the quite justified demand appears that it be clarified what socialism *actually* is, and that a division line be drawn between *alleged and genuine* socialism. The characterization is made that the essence of socialism is the socialization of the means of production, and *everything else* is considered a subjective or random addition to the fundamental

---

*Translated from the Czech by Karel Kovanda and James Schmidt. This is a translation from the 12th number of *Literarni listy*, May 1968.

1. The Stalin monument, built in the early sixties (!), i.e., long after the 20th Congress of the COSU. A few months after the towering monstrous structure, which overlooked the city and changed its panorama, was completed, it was torn down (after the 22nd Congress of the COSU). The pedestal is still there, looking like a fortification. A garden restaurant was to replace Stalin on top of it, but the idea seems to have been shelved long ago.

2. Klement Gottwald, the first Communist president of Czechoslovakia, who was demausolefied at the same time the Stalin monument was torn down. Thus, the two major Czechoslovak concessions to the personality cult, as they were viewed at the time, were dealt with.

3. The officials were the victims of the major Prague political trial, when Rudolf Slansky, ex-secretary general of the Communist Party, and eleven others were sentenced to death.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and *objectively* establishable. The characterization is made that socialism is a *scientifically managed* society, whose future is tied to the so-called scientific and technological revolution. Who would fail to agree with these assertions, particularly since they are *also* voiced by scientists and intellectuals?

Yet we have to doubt their veracity. As for the so-called scientific and technological revolution, it is astonishing that cliche prevails over thinking even where critical reasoning should be the profession: in the social sciences. It is indeed incredible with what energy and enthusiasm intellectuals *again willingly* subject themselves (after all these experiences) to ideological slogans,[4] although their professional duty ought to be to examine the inner value and meaning of them. The term "scientific and technological revolution" is a *mystification* concealing the *real* problems of modern science, modern technology, and of the modern (socialist) revolution. Ideologists of the scientific and technological revolution conceive of socialism in the context of their vision of the future in which the majority of the population will be engaged in *scientific work*, and never once do they reflect that this quantitative increase cannot lead to a dialectical leap and to a *new* quality, because this increase itself is *nothing but* a manifestation of the change that modern science has undergone. Modern science is a specialization and *only* therefore can it be effective and successful, and modern scientists are *specialists* who can perform their profession with a virtuosity and effectiveness without having a clear awareness of the *meaning* of science or of the *presuppositions* modern science is built upon. Modern science is not wisdom but exact knowing and mastering. Since the character of science has changed, science can be performed as "scientific work," as "research," and as "mass affair," requiring the acquisition of a certain basic knowledge and of a few elementary operations, *exactly* as in any other profession. The modern scientist is a specialist and as such is subject to all consequences of advanced division of labor. The image of a society composed *in the majority* of scientists-specialists, of scientists-researchers, ought therefore to be rather an impulse to critical reflection over the *meaning* of modern science than a pretext for an ideological camouflage of social contraditions.

In its most developed form, as in physics, science exists as a unity of knowing and objectivation, i.e., as a unity of theoretical investigation and technology. Technology belongs so basically to modern science that they merge, and in this unity the new decisive element of the entire modern reality is created: techno-science [*technověda*]. Modern technology is not (merely) an application of science, nor is it its condition or consequence. The combining and conjoining of modern science with technology into the truly new reality of techno-science is but an historical culmination of two processes springing from a *common* ground.

---

4. The concept "scientific and technological revolution" became particularly popular in Czechoslovakia after the interdisciplinary team of the Academy of Sciences headed by Radovan Richta published an influential volume called *Civilization at the Crossroads* (translated, White Plains, New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 3rd expanded edition, 1969) in the mid-sixties. In a subsequent issue of *Literarni listy* Richta responded to this thinly veiled attack on him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The common ground of modern science and of technology is a certain *laying out* of reality through which the world is both practically and theoretically transformed into an *object*. Reality thus laid out can become the subject of exact investigation and mastery. Science and technology is an approach to reality through which the subject makes sure that the reality at hand is surveyable and practically at his disposal. The basis of modern science and technology is *technical reason*, transforming reality (being) into a secured, surveyable, and manipulable object.

In this context, it is possible to judge both the uncritical belief in the omnipotence of technology and technological progress, as well as the romantic contempt for technology and the fear that technology will enslave man. Both attitudes obscure the *essence of technology*. The essence of technology is not machines and automatons, but *technical reason*, which lays out reality as a system of disposability, improvability, and reification. However strange and shocking it may appear to vulgar minds, much more is said about the *essence* of technology by Hegel's "bad infinity," Condorcet's "perfectability," by Kant's teachings about means and ends, or by Marx's analysis of capital, than by the most systematic study of technology and technical research and discoveries. Man is not threatened by machines. The enslaving rule of technology over mankind does not mean a revolt of machines against man; through this technical terminology people are only realizing unclearly the danger they will face if technical reason were identified with reason in general, if technical reason were to extend its rule over human reality so far that everything non-technical, non-disposable, non-calculable, and non-manipulable were posed against it and against man as non-reason.

Modern socialism is unimaginable without a developed technology and without developing technological progress, and without the socialization of the means of production. But both of these essential traits and all other important features can turn *against* socialism, i.e., they can degenerate and play quite an opposite role, if socialism were to lose its *historical* meaning and be unable to transform all these elements into a *concrete* totality. The historical meaning of socialism is the *liberation of man*, and socialism is historically justified only as long as it is a *revolutionary and liberating alternative*: an alternative to misery, to exploitation, to oppression, to injustice, to lies and mystification, to unfreedom, to indignity and humiliation.

The difficulties of modern socialism of the 20th century consist of the fact that so far, it has been unable *theoretically*, even less so practically, to comprehend, harmonize, and coordinate its role as a *liberating* historical alternative vis-à-vis societies of hunger and oppression in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; vis-à-vis societies of affluence and comfort in the most developed countries of Europe and North America; vis-à-vis societies in the countries of central and eastern Europe which have carried out radical social changes and whose *revolutionary potentialities* are far from exhausted.

If socialism fails anew to radically realize its *raison d'être* in these *changed* conditions, it may cease to play the role of a *revolutionary and liberating* alternative and, faced with the appalling negativity of the developing countries and the conformist positivity of the most advanced capitalist countries, it will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

become merely a *sham* alternative: symptoms of this danger have already appeared both in the slogan "catch up with and overtake America," and in the actual existence of a society which only substituted a system of general purchasability (the rule of money and capital) with a system of general manipulation (the rule of unlimited bureaucratic power).

Every practical step that liberates us from this head-turning conglomeration of bureaucracy and Byzantinism, from this monstrous symbiosis of the State and of a pagan Church, of hypocrisy and fanaticism, of ideology and faith, of bureaucratic grayness and mass hysteria, has of course a far greater value than the most noble declaration on liberty. But those minimal steps through which we renounce political crimes must not obscure or postpone the pressing *fundamental questions* upon which we have not yet touched and without which socialism as a *revolutionary* alternative for people of the 20th century is unthinkable; we must ask anew *who* is man and what is truth, what is being and what is time, what is the essence of technology and science, what is the *meaning* of revolution.

Liberation is a radical monthly magazine which provides accurate reportage and incisive analysis, as well as a forum for people involved in the struggle to make this a truly democratic, non-hierarchical society. Poetry and art are also regularly featured. Our rates are $7.00 for one year, $13.00 for two years, and $18.00 for three years. Sample copies are available upon request for 25 cents each.

Enclosed is $_____ for a _____ subscription to *Liberation.*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

Send to: 339 Lafayette St., N.Y., N.Y. 10012

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE THEORY OF THE CRASH

by

Lucio Colletti

Marx's attitude towards capitalism is a function of two different perspectives. The first is the *revolutionary* perspective, which aims at the overthrow of bourgeois society in order to reestablish on a new basis the human relationships which have been reversed and turned "upside down" in this society. The second is the *scientific* perspective, which aims at reconstructing the way the system functions and develops. Although quite different, these two perspectives do not appear juxtaposed in Marx's work: rather, they are closely connected so that each is supported and reinforced by the fact that it follows as a consequence of scientific analysis; and the latter is pushed to its extreme conclusions by the orientation and impulse of revolutionary teleology. These dual requirements and the way they are interconnected can be grasped in general outline by briefly examining Marx's critique of utopian socialism and then integrating this critique with that developed against the major classical political economists.

On the first point, Marx primarily stresses the fact that utopian socialism opposes to modern bourgeois society a "moralistic" viewpoint, i.e., an abstract, subjective viewpoint. It denounces the system's "injustices" without, however, penetrating its real mechanisms from within. Its condemnation proceeds from ideals and criteria lacking foundation in the reality being criticized. Under these conditions, writes Engels, "the solution of social problems ... the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. Society presented nothing but wrongs: to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as utopian; the more completely they were worked out in details, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure fantasies."[1]

Naturally, the immaturity of this early type of socialism must itself be considered a product of the objective situation. "The utopians ... were utopians because they could be nothing else at a time when capitalist production was as yet so little developed. They necessarily had to construct the elements of a new society out of their own heads, because within the old society the elements of the new were not as yet generally apparent."[2] Yet, these "qualifications" do not prevent Engels from seeing the profound innovation made in this field by historical materialism: it changed radically the critique of bourgeois society. It became no longer a matter of opposing abstract ideals to existing reality; rather, "the means of getting rid of the incongruities that have been brought to light must also be present, in a more or less developed condition, within the changed modes of production themselves. These means are not to be *invented*, spun out of the head, but *discovered* with the aid of the head in the existing material facts of production."[3]

---

1. Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1962), Vol. II, p. 121.
2. Engels, *Anti-Duehring* (Moscow, 1962), p. 121.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 365-366.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This new program is executed in Marx's *Capital*, compared to which utopian socialism's limitations stand out all the more clearly. In fact, writes Lenin, in criticizing capitalist society, the old socialism "condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it had visions of a better order and endeavored to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation. But . . . [it] could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development or show what *social force* is capable of becoming the creator of a new society."[4] In Marx, on the other hand, all these shortcomings seem to be eliminated. The system's laws are investigated and discovered in their objective consistency as if they were processes of natural history. And when they remain, the moral indignation, invective and condemnation are framed and imprisoned in the network of scientific discourse and its rigorous demonstrations. "And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement," writes Marx in the Preface to *Capital*, " – and it is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society – it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development . . . . My standpoint, from which the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them."[5]

The most obvious sign of the transformation the subject matter of utopian socialism undergoes in Marx is the way *Capital* treats the problem of exploitation. This theme, traditionally an object of "moral" considerations, becomes the argument of the theory of surplus value. There is no longer any appeal, as in Proudhon, to the idea of *justice éternelle*. Exploitation is no longer denounced as a theft, an "injustice," or a violation of legality. Rather, *Capital* attempts to demonstrate how the production of surplus value is perfectly compatible with the law of exchange of commodities based on equivalence. As Marx put it: "The circumstance, that on the one hand the daily sustenance of labor-power costs only half a day's labor, while on the other hand the very same labor-power can work during a whole day, that consequently the value which its use during one day creates, is double what he pays for that use, this circumstance is, without doubt, a piece of good luck for the buyer, but by no means an injury to the seller."[6] The same notion is reiterated some years later in the so-called *Randglossen zu Wagner* where, after denying that the profit made by the capitalist can be called a "theft" from the worker, Marx writes: "I depict the capitalist as a necessary functionary of capitalist production and show very extensively that he not only 'detracts' or 'steals', but forces the *production of surplus-value* and therefore helps to create what is subsequently detracted. In addition, I simply show that in the very exchange of commodities *only equivalents* are exchanged, and that the capitalist – as soon as he has paid the

4. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1960), Vol. XIX, p. 27.
5. Karl Marx, *Capital* (Moscow, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 10.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

worker the actual value of his labor-power -- expropriates the *surplus-value* with full right, i.e., with the right corresponding to this mode of production."[7]

For Marx, this is the explanation of the genesis of surplus value, which in the old socialism was the object of moral considerations concerning "justice" and "equality." Throughout his work, Marx follows it in its activity as the propulsive element of capitalist accumulation. And from surplus value, always seen as the antithesis of wage labor, he derives other categories such as profit, rent and interest in a way which, in broad outline, reconstructs the entire social mechanism.

Thus, Marx frees himself from utopian socialism by becoming an economist and a scientist, i.e., by undertaking the investigation where Smith and Ricardo left off. The antithesis of bourgeois society is no longer depicted as a subjective ideal *external* to it; instead, it is discovered within this very society: it is the contradiction between capital and wage labor. Since from the strictly economic viewpoint wage labor itself is part of capital, i.e., variable capital, and as Mill put it, "the term capital in this sense includes both capital and labor," the contradiction between the two ultimately results in a contradiction embodied in capital itself, i.e., an *internal* contradiction in the mechanism of capitalist accumulation.

So far we have dealt only with the first point: Marx's attitude towards utopian socialism. Concerning the second, Marx's attitude towards classical political economy, the argument must in a sense be reversed. Whereas Marx answers the utopian as an *economist,* he answers Smith and Ricardo as a *critic of political economy.* In both cases his critique hinges on history. There is a difference, however, that must be pointed out. Marx contraposes history to the utopians in the sense that history is synonymous with adherence to real processes, i.e., the actual and not the imaginary penetration of existing conditions, and therefore, the scientific comprehension of the mechanism of accumulation. On the other hand, it is opposed to the economists in the sense that history, with the relativism it entails, disposes us to recognize types of society other than the existing one – both those existing in the past and those *possible in the future* – and can prevent economists from "becoming immersed in bourgeois production as production in itself." Thus, in the first case Marx points out that Sismondi "convincingly criticizes the contradictions of bourgeois production without *understanding* them, thus also failing to understand the process of their dissolution."[8] In the second case he observes that "bourgeois economists consider capital as an external and *natural* (not historical) form of production," that is, "bourgeois limitations consider capitalist forms of production as absolute forms, i.e., as the eternal natural forms of production."[9]

In other words, although the first fundamental point of dissension with the utopian socialists dealt with the inability of their analysis to penetrate *within* the mechanisms of capitalist production, the crux of the critique of political

7. Marx, "Randglossen zur Adolph Wagners *Lehrbuch der politischen Oekonomie",* in Marx and Engels, *Werke,* Vol. XIX.
8. Marx, *Storia delle Teorie Economiche,* (Turin, 1958), Vol. III, p. 59.
9. Marx, *Grundrisse der Politischen Oekonomie* (Berlin, 1953), p. 364.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economy is the opposite. It is that Smith and Ricardo failed to see the historical relativity of the capitalist system and, mistaking it for the absolute form of production, remained its prisoners, unable to stand outside it enough to grasp it as a whole and criticize it in its totality. This critique is quite evident in the analysis of commodities at the beginning of *Capital* and permeates the theory of value. In fact, in considering the production of commodities as the universal, inevitable form of production in every possible society, Smith and Ricardo end up regarding the "commodity-form" taken by all the products of labor under capitalist conditions as a constant and a datum of their investigation, i.e., as a non-problematic fact. Marx writes: "If Ricardo believes that the *commodity*-form is neutral, this follows from his hypothesis that the bourgeois mode of production is absolute and therefore a mode of production without more precise specific determinations."[10]

It follows from this perspective that, first of all, since Smith and Ricardo assume that the product of labor *always* assumes the commodity form, economics as a science simply reduces to the "science of commodity-production." Unable to imagine other modes of production, political economy makes the particular historical mode of production what the motion of bodies is for mechanics, a datum which cannot be gone beyond and which cannot be left out of consideration. Secondly, since political economy regards commodity production as the universal, inevitable form of every possible social production, economic problems assume a purely quantitative character: political economy never poses the problem of why the product of human labor in determinate historical conditions takes on the "commodity-form" and why, therefore, social human labor appears as the "value of things." Instead, having assumed commodities as the irreducible datum, it restricts itself to investigating the basic quantitative relations whereby commodities are exchanged among themselves, i.e., it investigates "exchange value" rather than value proper and the social relations hidden in it.

With Marx all of these problems undergo a profound transformation. Commodity-production, far from being the universal, inevitable form of economic life, becomes only *one* of its possible forms. Obviously, this form has been customary for centuries and still dominates the modern era; yet it is nonetheless an historically conditioned form which cannot in any way claim to be a direct manifestation of "human" nature. At the same time, as Sweezy points out, the economist "cannot limit his attention to the quantitative relations arising from the production of commodities," but "must also pay attention to the character of the social relations underlying the form of 'commodities'." And, "More concretely, in the case of exchange value there is, as Adam Smith saw, the quantitative relation between products; hidden beyond this, as Marx was the first to see, there is a specific, historically conditioned, relation between producers."[11]

This broadening of the domain of political economy, which follows from the

10. Marx, *Storia delle Teorie Economiche*, Vol. II, p. 582.

11. Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York and London, 1968), p. 25.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

need to go beyond that commodity-production which was the last element for Smith and Ricardo, corresponds in Marx to the fact that his theory of value is *also* a *theory of fetishism* of commodities and of capital. It is a theory through which he not only limits the confines of the whole system from the outside but also uncovers the character of the "upside-down" reality in which human relations appear as relations among things and things appear to have social qualities.

In other words, the knowing or scientific perspective, pushed to its extreme consequences, becomes for Marx a revolutionary project. The need for the *socialist* transformation reappears from within the economic analysis. Thus, it is not sufficient to understand and *explain* the production of commodities: it must be *abolished*, i.e., the material and social conditions within which the fetishistic inversion takes place must be reversed. Even when explained and understood, the mechanism whereby social human labor appears in the objective form of ownership of things and the world of products dominates the producer does not thereby cease to exist and function. "The recent scientific discovery, that the products of labor, so far as they are values, are but material expressions of the human labor spent in their production, marks, indeed, an epoch in the history of the development of the human race." But, Marx continues, it "by no means dissipates the mist through which the social character of labor appears to us." "The fact that in the particular form of production with which we are dealing, viz., the production of commodities, the specific social character of private labor carried on independently, consists in the equality of every kind of that labor, by virtue of its being human labor, which character, therefore, assumes in the product the form of value – this fact appears to the producers, notwithstanding the discovery above referred to, to be just as real and final, as the fact that, after the discovery by science of the component gases of air, the atmosphere itself remained unaltered."[12]

Thus, science is not enough, since it is not just a matter of correcting Smith's and Ricardo's interpretation of reality but of correcting this very reality. The mystification is continually generated by the objective processes of capitalist production, even before it reaches the economists' level of reflection. The basic inversion, according to which wage labor – the source of capital – becomes dependent on it while capital – only its product – comes to dominate the producer, is not brought about by Smith and Ricardo. This *quid pro quo* is written in the very mechanism of capitalism, in which "it is not the worker that uses the working conditions, but, on the contrary, the working conditions that use the worker."[13]

In a nutshell, science is not enough if "in this mode of production everything is represented upside-down." The very social process must be inverted. In fact, political economy is not a true science. Only the revolution is the true science. Since labor must dispose of capital instead of the reverse, the only treatise that can enunciate this scientific axiom is the socialization of the means of production.

In this total *negation* of the capitalist system, all the themes enunciated by

12. Marx, *Capital*, p. 74.
13. Marx, *Il Capitale* (Rome, 1951), Vol. I, Book II, p. 129.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

utopian socialism reappear in an even more pronounced and audacious form. In fact, the socialization of the means of production means only this: the abolition of commodity production and, therefore, the abolition of money as well; the abolition of the market, i.e., of buyer-seller relations and, therefore, of all the contractual and juridical forms that have come about with exchange; the abolition of the state and, therefore, the transformation of politics into the "administration of things." All the "utopianism" reappears from within science itself.

Yet, the true remaining difference with respect to utopian socialism is the nature of the *negation* of the system. It is no longer merely an ideal or an external subjective criterion but a real factor inherent in capitalism itself. In this case, the negation is wage-labor or the working class. It produces its own means of subsistence and, at the same time, surplus-value, i.e., profit, rent, and interest. By its labor, it supplies the revenues of all fundamental classes of society. In fact, as long as it is subordinated to capital, the working class is only a gear in the capitalist mechanism. It appears only as "variable capital," i.e., as part of that capital which is actually its own product. This is the inverted or "upside-down" society mentioned earlier. However, reinforced as it is by capitalist development, the working class organizes itself and its consciousness matures in opposition to the whole system. It becomes the lever that can overthrow the whole society: the *negation* that can become real.

To summarize: all of Marx's work appears as both a revolutionary project and a scientific analysis. It is the reconstruction of the system's functioning and development while at the same time it is the consciousness of the fact that under this mode of production everything appears "upside-down". In the first case, Marx the *economist* continues Smith's and Ridardo's work. In the second, Marx is the *critic of political economy*, precisely in the sense that political economy is *bourgeois* political economy. Two different interpretations of the theory of value, which must be indicated, correspond to these two different perspectives.

The first is the interpretation whereby the theory of value appears to be a "regulative principle" which allows the explanation of the system's internal functioning. Hilferding writes that "If we consider the complexity of proportional relations which are indispensable in a system of production, no matter how anarchic it may be, we immediately face the problem of who cares to uphold these relations. Clearly, only the law of prices can perform this function since capitalist production is regulated by prices, and their variations determine the expansion or the limitation of production, the starting of new production, etc. Here, too, we find the indispensibility of an objective law of value as the only possible regulative element of capitalist economics."[14] Sweezy also considers this interpretation when, after noticing that "the law of value is essentially a theory of general equilibrium," he points out that "this implies that one of the primary functions of the law of value is to make clear that in a commodity-producing society, in spite of the absence of centralized and coordinated decision-making, there is order and not simply chaos." And he goes on: "No one decides how productive effort is to be allocated or how much of the various

14. Rudolf Hilferding, *Il Capitale Finanziario* (Milan, 1961), p. 335.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kinds of commodities are to be produced, yet the problem does get solved, and not in a purely arbitrary and unintelligible manner. It is the function of the law of value to explain how this happens and what the outcome is."[15]

Along this same line, and with the advantage of being able to indicate its birthplace in Smith and Ricardo, he also adheres to Dobb's interpretation of the law of value. "Only with the work of Adam Smith, and its more rigorous systematization by Ricardo, did political economy create that unifying quantitative principle which enabled it to make postulates in terms of the general equilibrium of the economic system – to make deterministic statements about the general relationships which held between the major elements of the system. In political economy this unifying principle, or system of general statements cast in quantitative form, consisted of a theory of value."[16]

As can readily be seen here, the theory of value is the "live-wire" that allows us to understand how everything which appears at first sight irrational and fortuitous in the system is actually regulated and dominated by an internal rationality. From value to prices of production and even up to market prices; from surplus-value to profit and up to equalization of profits themselves through competition; the entire capitalist system, which appears at first sight to be totally chaotic, turns out to be a fundamentally balanced organism in which every party is in harmonious correspondence with the others. From this viewpoint, political economy appears to Marx himself as a science whose structure is not at all different from that of all other sciences. In the same way physics studies falling bodies, economics as a science analyzes and describes the "natural laws" of capitalist production, the same laws discussed in the Preface to *Capital.* These laws are objective material processes – "actual operating *tendencies* functioning according to their own iron law." Moreover, like the natural sciences, political economy also turns out to be in a *positive* relation to its object. Here, in fact, the object, i.e., "the development of the economic formation of society" understood "as a process of natural history", is not qualified as an "upside-down" reality to be "negated" (from the scientific viewpoint, these qualifications are meaningless since science's task is to explain "facts" or "sure phenomena" and nothing else). Rather, it is treated as a self-sufficient reality whose functioning must be understood. This aspect of the theory of value is clearly indicated in the expressions of the authors just quoted. The law is a law of "general equilibrium". It explains how, notwithstanding all friction and contradictions, the system functions, and how a new order constantly reappears from chaos.

In the other interpretation, the law of value is the theory of *fetishism.* In this case, too, it is claimed that "the production of commodities . . . has its peculiar, inherent laws" which obtain "despite anarchy" and which "affect the individual producers and in antagonism to them, as inexorable natural laws of their particular form of production."[17] But in this case, the "natural" and

15. Sweezy, *op.cit.*, p. 53.
16. Maurice Dobb, *Political Economy and Capitalism* (New York, 1945), p. 5.
17. Engels, *Anti-Duehring*, p. 372.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"objective" character of these laws is only the *fetishistic* projection of the very social relations operating when, instead of being dominated by man, they have escaped human control. In this sense, the laws of the market obtain for men with a "natural necessity" and the movements of the market are as unpredictable as earthquakes, not because the market is a "natural" phenomenon like the fall of bodies but because what has taken the objective form of *things* and of *processes among things* are the social relations among men themselves.

The difference is evident: in the first case the law of value is a theory of "general equilibrium" which *explains* the functioning of the system; in the second it is a theory which enunciates the reasons why men must *overthrow* the system (eliminate commodity production and proceed to full socialization) if they want to free themselves from the determinism of the market and to dominate their own relations. It is in this context that Engels correctly talks about a "leap of humanity from the reign of necessity to the reign of freedom." Furthermore, this second interpretation of the law of value not only expresses the fundamental contradiction through which labor, the source of capital, becomes its product; it also clearly implies that the only force which can overthrow the system is not a mechanical factor but the proletariat's ability to transform itself from a subordinate internal element of capitalism into a *subjective, political* external agent antithetical to the whole system.

In the opposing pull of these two different perspectives, all of Marx's work seems to break in an unbridgeable rupture which gives rise once again to old antinomies.

But before surrendering to philosophical skepticism, it is worthwhile to extract from the mind everything it can yield. It is true that the law of value is both the principle that regulates the *equilibrium* of the system and the principle that expresses its fundamental *contradiction.* It is true that it is both the principle that *explains the existence* of the system and that of its *negation.* But the point is that although capitalism is a mode of production mined with radical contradictions, it is still an existing, functioning system and theory must deal with it simultaneously in two ways. It must be able to demonstrate both how lack of harmony and radical contradiction constantly interact in an "equilibrium" marked by "proportions" and "measure" (for otherwise, the system would not exist), and how this order constantly breaks down in a disordered movement. Marx is very clear on this point from the very beginning of his investigations. "The economists say that the *average price* of commodities is equal to the cost of production; that this is a *law.* The anarchical movement, in which rise is compensated by fall and fall by rise, is regarded by them as chance. With just as much right one could regard the fluctuations as the law and the determinations by the costs of production as chance, as has actually been done by other economists." Marx concludes: "The total movement of this disorder is its order. In the course of this industrial anarchy, in this movement in a circle, competition compensates, so to speak, for one excess by means of another."[18]

This is not empty sophism, as it might appear at first sight. The hidden

18. Marx, "Wage, Labour and Capital", *Selected Works* Vol. I, p. 87.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

problem here is real. In fact, if Marx's work were not both a *critique* of capitalism, i.e., an analysis of the *internal* contradictions undermining it, and at the same time an exposition and reconstruction of the way in which, despite everything, the contradictions are overcome and the system *exists and functions,* it would be stuck with the empty simplicity of one of the following two errors. It would either "demonstrate too much": overemphasize the internal contradictions of the system and thus demonstrate not just the contradictory nature of the existing system but also the *impossibility* of its existence and functioning (e.g., Sismondi or even Rosa Luxemburg). Or else, it would be forced to repeat the opposite error of those who, caught and impressed by the *existence* of the mechanism under investigation, play down and minimize its internal disequilibrium to the point of rendering its existence *absolute and eternal* and, therefore, fail to see why the system cannot function and last forever (e.g., Tugan-Baranowski and, in a certain sense, even Hilferding and Otto Bauer).

Similarly, it seems that even the antinomy discussed earlier can somehow be resolved, i.e., the antinomy whereby Marx's work is seen sometimes as the discovery and the *noticing* of objective material processes, and at other times as the unmasking of that false *fetishistic* "objectivity" in which human social relations are transformed when they escape social control. Although it is impossible here to analyze this fully, the solution could probably be found by reconsidering the unity of economic-material-objective factors and socio-historical or subjective factors upon which the unity of economics and sociology is built in Marx. In fact, as Schumpeter put it: "in the Marxian argument sociology and economics pervade each other. In intent, and to some degree also in actual practice, they are one. All the major concepts and propositions are hence both economic and sociological and carry the same meaning on both planes – if, from our standpoint, we may still speak of two planes of argument. Thus, the economic *category*, "labor", and the social *class*, "proletariat", are, in principle at least, made congruent, in fact, identical. Or the economists' functional distribution – that is to say, the explanation of the way in which incomes emerge as returns to productive services irrespective of what social class any recipient of such a return may belong to – enters the Marxian system only in the form of distribution between social classes and thus acquires a different connotation."[19] Yet, after having evaluated everything, one difficulty remains.

Let us face the problem squarely. Granted that a "theory of the crash" aims at demonstrating *scientifically* the certain, well-determined reasons why the system has had it, the question here is whether or not there is a theory of the crash in Marx. If we examine the debate on this point between Marx's followers and interpreters, we notice that all divergences eventually boil down to this. For some, denying that Marx's work contains a theory of the crash amounts to betraying his thought, emasculating it, and depriving it of meaning. For others, it is a betrayal to attribute one to him, even in good faith. In the uncertainty of these alternatives, it would be very useful, at least in terms of a preliminary orientation, if it were possible to associate either of these positions with a

19. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York and Evanston, 1962), p. 45.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political tendency. But another complication surrounds the theory of the crash: it has been upheld both by interpreters on the "Right" and on the "Left". In fact, both the father of "revisionism", Bernstein, and his most ferocious and intransigent adversary, Rosa Luxemburg, attributed a theory of the crash to Marx. On the other hand, both Kautsky and Lenin, along with the social democrat Hilferding, and the then Left-wing Bolshevik Bukharin, claimed the opposite.

My own opinion is that there is a theory of the crash in Marx's work but that it also contains reasons to deny, in principle, the validity of any such theory. Let us leave aside the question of the periodic recurrence of crises and their progressive worsening which is elaborated less conclusively in Marx's work. "The law of the tendential fall of the rate of profit" is a genuine theory of the crash. The term "tendential" should not mislead us. In fact, it indicates that the law as such is restrained by the action of antagonistic causes which "counteract and neutralize the action of the general law, thus giving it the character of a simple tendency." But this does not mean that the law is annihilated or overcome but rather that its "complete realization is obstructed and slowed down," i.e., the law operates, but over a longer time span and through a more complicated process. In fact, were it not this way it would be difficult to understand how we can talk about it as a *law*.

Because of its very structure, this law allows us to understand what Marx means when in the Preface to *Capital* he talks about "laws of nature, i.e., of objective material processes of the capitalist mode of production." In fact, since the law outlines a process in which the increase of the "organic composition" of capital cannot in the long-run be compensated by the increase in the rate of exploitation or the rate of surplus-value, it ends up expressing a relation whereby not only are the only units that count "constant capital" and "variable capital" elements internal to capital itself rather than social classes, i.e., the subjective historical agents (capitalist and working classes) with their struggle and their clash, but also the law's realization must develop mechanically.

The mechanism is this: to increase surplus-value and therefore profit, the capitalist must increase the productivity of labor, i.e., introduce technological innovations. But the introduction of these new techniques (better machinery, etc.) increases the "organic composition" of capital (the percentage of constant capital with respect to all the invested capital); in other words, it increases a factor which decreases the rate of profit more than it can be increased by raising the rate of exploitation. The process is that of a motor which runs into trouble because of the very mechanisms that make it function, without the process itself being influenced in any way by the class-struggle or by the participants' consciousness. So much so, in fact, that in interpreting this law an author who has accepted it, Maurice Dobb, feels the need to submit it to such severe limitations that its very consistency is threatened. He writes: "This law of motion could not be given a purely technological interpretation: could not be made a simple corollary of a generalization concerning the nature of changes in productive technique. The actual outcome of this interaction of conflicting elements might be different in one concrete situation from what it was in another and different situation. There is often a tendency . . . to give Marx's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

view of this matter a too mechanistic twist, depicting it as though it relied on the forecast of profit falling in a continuous downward curve until it reached a point at which the system would come to an abrupt stop, like an engine with insufficient pressure of steam behind the piston. The true interpretation would seem to be that Marx saw tendency and counter-tendency as elements of conflict out of which the general movement of the system emerged."[20]

Dobb's concern is legitimate. Unfortunately, he ends up defending the law in the very same way that critics reject it. Tendency and counter-tendency balance each other; the result of this interaction varies with different situations; there is no way of predicting which of the two tendencies will eventually prevail. These are the same arguments adduced by Sweezy to attack the law. "If both the organic composition of capital and the rate of surplus-value are assumed variable, as we think they should be, then the direction in which the rate of profit will change becomes indeterminate."[21] More specifically: "Whether their [the capitalists'] actions will succeed in restoring the rate of profit, or whether they will only act to hasten its fall, is an issue which cannot be settled on general theoretical grounds."[22] Certainly, the "subjective" elements reassert themselves here; but the validity of the law is completely destroyed. The system is not destined to an inevitable "crash" through a mechanical impasse. The only factor that *can* destroy it is the clash of classes, a clash in which, besides objective material conditions, all the subjective factors like "class-consciousness", the degree of class unity and organization, and the efficacy of each class' "political instrument" participate.

It can be objected that this last formulation is closest to the spirit of Marx's doctrine. In fact, Marx was never a determinist. The statement which best summarized all his thought is that it is men who make history, even though they do it in conditions not of their choice. But to the extent that the subject of *Capital* is capital itself and not the human wage-labor that produces it (which appears instead as a simple moment in the self-evaluation of capital, i.e., as "live" labor *incorporated* in its "dead" objectivity), it is understandable that the end of capitalism could at times be seen in this work precisely in terms of a "brisk stop" in the functioning of the motor of accumulation.

Let us leave aside all the hypotheses that come to mind: the "young" and the "old" Marx and Korsch's arguments in *Marxism and Philosophy* about the different historical characters of the two periods Marx dealt with (the first dominated by the revolutionary climate of 1848 and the second by the stabilization of capital and the absence of working-class initiative). Let us also leave aside the question raised by Carr in *1917* about the possibility of defining Leninism as a "return to the young Marx". What must now be stressed is how, even in terms of a sure interpretation, the consciousness of what has been said occasionally seems to flash through Marx's own pages. In Chapter 15, Volume III of *Capital* (precisely in the section dealing with the "tendential fall of the rate of profit"), recalling Ricardo's uneasiness on this point, Marx writes: "What

20. Dobb, *op.cit.*, pp 109-110.
21. Sweezy, *op.cit.*, p. 102.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

worries Ricardo is the fact that the rate of profit, the stimulating principle of capitalist production, the fundamental premise and driving force of accumulation, should be endangered by the development of production itself. And here the quantitative proportion means everything. There is, indeed, something deeper behind it, of which he is only vaguely aware. It comes to the surface here in a purely economic way – i.e., from the bourgeois point of view, within the limitations of capitalist understanding, from the standpoint of capitalist production itself – that it has its barrier, that it is relative, that it is not an absolute, but only a historical mode of production corresponding to a definite limited epoch in the development of the material requirements of production."[23]

If our interpretation is correct, the falling rate of profit and the *quantitative* relation it expresses are considered as the way the historical and therefore transitory character of capitalism appears. Yet that way, and the "purely economic way" in which it is expressed, are considered correlative to the "bourgeois point of view", i.e., the viewpoint which remains "within the limitations of capitalist understanding," the very viewpoint of capitalist production itself. Unless we are completely wrong, the fallibility of capitalism should not be seen by socialists as a theory of the crash, that is, in "purely economic" terms.

In other words, objective tendencies such as the falling rate of profit make sense only to the extent that they appear as conditions and real premises of the class-struggle, i.e., of the clash at a political and subjective level. Alone they have no decisive value. The illusion that they have such value generates the various theories of the crash. On the other hand, although the true conditions of capitalism are always class-contradictions, it is also true that the outcome of the clash cannot be predicted in advance. It can be objected that subjective factors are always themselves moments of reality. But then the problem becomes the following: either the subjective datum is itself as calculable as an objective datum, in which case we are back in the theory of the crash, or it is not, in which case social science can never come up with the predetermination of the outcome of the process. In the latter case, however, the problem remains as to whether social science can remain this open and still be called "science". This is the problem with Sweezy's argument in opposing the law of the falling rate of profit, when he assumes that "both the organic composition of capital and the rate of surplus-value are assumed variables and concludes that "the direction in which the rate of profit will change becomes indeterminate." Here, the course of the historical process turns out to be "open", not predetermined; but the proposition asserting the possible equivalence between the increase in organic composition and the increase in the rate of surplus-value seems more like a simple restatement of the problem than its solution.

Here, the opposition between Bernstein and Luxemburg seems to contain something typical. If the end of capitalism cannot be scientifically demonstrated, then the foundation of the socialist program falls back on subjective ideals. In other words, it becomes an idealistic foundation and there is no longer any

23. Marx, *Capital* Vol. III, p. 254.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

objective necessity, i.e., the foundation based on the material-social process. On the other hand, if that end is scientifically demonstrated as the unavoidable outcome of objective laws, then we somehow end up in the theory of the crash; and the subjective intervention, the consciousness of the participants, while it "can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs" of the new society, can, as Marx put it in the Preface to *Capital*, "neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development."

socialist Revolution

FORTHCOMING:

Paul Joseph—The Making of the U.S. Indochina Policy
Martin Murray—The U.S. Future in Vietnam
Eli Zaretsky—The Family: Public and Private
Martin J. Sklar—Economic Theory and U.S. Capitalism

CURRENT ISSUE (NOVEMBER-DECEMBER):

Carl Boggs—Gramsci's Prison Notebooks
Robert Fitch—Who Rules the Corporations? Response to Paul Sweezy
Brian Henderson—Jean-Luc Godard and the Attempted Suicide of Bourgeois Cinema
Ros Petchesky and Kate Ellis—Day Care in Corporate America

SPECIAL OFFER: For a New America: Essays in History and Politics from "Studies on the Left," 1957-1967. $1.50 with subscription.

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
AGENDA PUBLISHING COMPANY
396 SANCHEZ STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94114

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

Single Issue @ 1.50 _____ **Foreign Subscription @ $6.50** _____

Subscription (6 issues) @ $6.00 _____ **SPECIAL OFFER @ $7.50** _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERPRETING HUSSERL AND HEIDEGGER: THE ROOT OF SARTRE'S THOUGHT

by

Ronald Aronson

I. Introduction

Any reader of Sartre knows that there are serious problems in his thought. Standing, say, in 1947 and looking back at the early Sartre we find him reducing human problems to ontological conditions ("hell is other people", "man is a useless passion"): we find him defending a freedom which is as untenable as it is ineffectual; we find him erasing all the structures of consciousness (emotional, cognitive, and social) which make the world intelligible and making consciousness into a "nothing", "clear as a great wind"; and we find frustration and alienation built into life's structure and resolvable only in art. Looking forward to his quarter century of more socially and psychologically sophisticated theoretical study we find Sartre continuing his strange emphasis on the *individual*, be it in philosophy or biography; we continue to encounter the Other as the enemy, now because of scarcity; we find Sartre maintaining an unresolvable gap between man and his world, now by making scarcity into a virtually transhistorical category which dooms all people to struggle for the foreseeable future; we discover him still preoccupied with art and imagination as ways of coping with reality. Once again we find a thought which is self-absorbed, which turns in on itself, which momentarily gains reality and which loses it again and again; and once again we find his theoretical work developing the ontological basis for an unshakeable gloom about human prospects. None of this is to deny Sartre's energy and scope, or to belittle him as less than a brilliant intellectual force of our age. He is, for example, one of a handful of intellectuals who rescued the possibilities of serious radical thought from the Stalinist debacle: his is a historical contribution of the first order. Still, all of the problems just indicated point to an overall impression given off by Sartre, that his thought, though so often brilliant and illuminating, moves in a straitjacket of its own making; seems caught up in and severely restricted by its own conceptual apparatus. Could it be that somewhere, at its roots, is a set of terms or attitudes that bind and hinder its development; that determine its basic weakness?

Yes, I think so. Without being overly reductionist, I'd like to show how some of the persistent Sartrean failings arise in the original terms of his thought. That is, I want to go to the beginning and to locate his key concepts – which explain the troubles of both his existentialist and his Marxist phase – at their point of formation. What are these key terms? His dualism, for example, which so separates things from things human as to keep their interaction unintelligible and their harmony unthinkable; his gloomy and oppressive sense of the world which, right on into his Marxist *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, limits the possibility of fruitful human interaction with it; his disconnected, disengaged sense of humans, whether seen as consciousness or *l'homme de besoin* – which makes them both free and futile; the inwardness, the persistent interiority of a thought in which social groupings are nearly always secondary and oppressive, in which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the isolated individual is first and final; and finally, Sartre's penchant for universal analysis of the timeless and *a priori* structures in which experience takes shape. This essay will not try to demonstrate how these terms and attitudes shape Sartre's whole *corpus* or cause the problems I indicated earlier. Other writers are already doing this,[1] and some of the areas they leave uncovered will be dealt with in my own study of Sartre's thought. My task here is narrower: to go back to the beginning in order to see Sartre develop his characteristic terms, to see how they distort reality, and to explain their roots in a basic posture towards the world.

Back to the beginning: Simone de Beauvoir has given us a delightful sketch of this young academic's first encounter with the thought of Edmund Husserl: "Raymond Aron was spending a year at the French Institute in Berlin and studying Husserl simultaneously with preparing a historical thesis. When he came to Paris he spoke of Husserl to Sartre. We spent an evening together at the Bec de Gaz in the Rue Montparnasse. We ordered the specialty of the house, apricot cocktails; Aron said, pointing to his glass: 'You see, my dear fellow, if you are a phenomenologist, you can talk about this cocktail and make philosophy out of it.' Sartre turned pale with emotion at this. Here was just the thing he had been longing to achieve for years – to describe objects just as he saw and touched them, and extract philosophy from the process. Aron convinced him that phenomenology exactly fitted in with his special preoccupations: bypassing the antithesis of idealism and realism, affirming simultaneously both the supremacy of reason and the reality of the visible world as it appears to our senses. On the Boulevard Saint-Michel Sartre purchased Levinas' book on Husserl, and was so eager to inform himself on the subject that he leafed through the volume as he walked along, without even having cut the pages . . . Sartre decided to make a serious study of him, and took the necessary steps to succeed Aron at the French Institute in Berlin for the coming year – this on Aron's own instigation."[2]

Sartre's early writings abound with enthusiasm for phenomenology, Husserl, and to a lesser degree, Heidegger. The publication of Husserl's *Ideas*, Sartre writes in *Imagination*, was "the great event of pre-World War I philosophy . . . This book was destined to revolutionize psychology no less than philosophy."[3] In *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre evidently elevates phenomenology over such thinkers as Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche: "For centuries we have not felt so realistic a current."[4] Why? "The phenomenologists have given full measure to man's agonies and sufferings, and also to his rebellions" (*ibid.*).

---

1. See for example, Dick Howard's "Existentialism and Marxism: On Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*" and James F. Sheridan, *Sartre: The Radical Conversion* (Athens, Ohio, 1969).
2. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (Cleveland, 1962), p. 112.
3. Jean Paul Sartre, *L'imagination* (Paris, 1965); trans. by Forest Williams as *Imagination* (Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 126.
4. Jean Paul Sartre, "La Transcendence de L'Ego: Esquisse d'une description phenomenologique", *Recherches Philosophiques*, VI, 1931-37. Trans. by Forest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick as *The Transcendence of the Ego* (New York, 1957), p. 104.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sartre's breathless four page note on Husserl, written in 1939, applauds Husserl for throwing philosophy where it belongs: "on the highway, in the city, in the middle of the crowd, thing among things, man among men."[5] And Sartre's enthusiasm goes beyond pronouncements: in his psychological writings he eagerly describes himself as a phenomenological psychologist, carrying out Husserl's directives in the fields of imagination and emotion.[6] There is no way to look at the development of Sartre's key terms without studying his original encounter with phenomenology.

What did Sartre meet in Husserl? The best place to begin is the breathless little essay, "Une Idée Fondamentale de la 'Phenomenologie de Husserl': L'Intentionnalite", in which Sartre enthusiastically proclaims his kinship to both Husserl and Heidegger. There he attempts to convey the meaning of Husserl's central insight, intentionality, with reference to Heidegger's theme of being-in-the-world. It appears in 1939, after he had conceived or completed his other early philosophical and psychological works. Thus "Une Idée" directly presents the meaning phenomenology had for Sartre, as he had already embodied it in his specific writings on the transcendental Ego, the imagination and the emotions. And in order to understand this meaning we must keep in mind that this essay indicates how Sartre used Husserl to free himself from academic idealism -- specifically that of Brunschvich. Most of his key positions in "Une Idee" are formulated *against* that idealism, against a philosophy which would study the mind as the source and mainspring of the world and in so doing turn away from studying the world.

The essay begins by mocking "digestive philosophy", in which "the mind-spider drew things into its web, covered them with a white foam and slowly swallowed them, reducing them to its own substance" ("Une Idée", p. 129). In this view, common also to empirico-criticism, neo-Kantianism, and psychologism, objects become mere contents of consciousness, which is envisaged as their *receptacle*. Husserl, on the other hand, never tired of affirming that things cannot be dissolved in consciousness. We view a tree -- it remains *over there*, by the road. It cannot *enter* consciousness because it is of a different nature. Consciousness does not grasp it by "digesting" it: "To know is to 'explode towards,' to break away from the moist gastric intimacy in order to go, down there, beyond self, towards that which is not self, beyond, towards the tree and yet outside it; for it escapes me and repulses me and I am no more able to lose myself in it than it is able to dilute itself in me: outside of it, outside of me" (p. 130).

This view leads to profound consequences which Sartre is only too eager to unfold. First, already obvious, is the sharp *separation* of consciousness from its objects; and this contains an equally obvious second conclusion: a consciousness

5. "Une Idée Fondamentale de la 'Phénomènologie' de Husserl: L'Intentionnalité", *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise* (1939), p. 132.

6. *Imagination*, p. 137; also *L'Imaginaire: Psychologie phénomènologique de l'imagination* (Paris, 1940); trans. as *Psychology of Imagination* (New York, 1948), pp. 13-14; and *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions* (Paris, 1939), trans. by Bernard Frechtman as *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory* (New York, 1948), pp. 1-21.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which does not digest or assimilate its object *goes out towards them*. Consciousness is an *act*, a series of acts, but never a place. It exists *only* as it moves out of itself towards objects. Viewed by itself, Sartre argues, consciousness is "clear as a great wind; there is no longer anything in it except a movement to escape itself .,. . " (*ibid.*). A consciousness which has nothing "inside" is "nothing but the outside of itself; and it is this absolute flight, this refusal to be substance, which constitutes it as consciousness" (*ibid.*). For Sartre this is the "profound meaning of Husserl's discovery: consciousness is a connected series of explosions which tear us away from ourselves, which do not ever allow a 'myself' the leisure to form behind them" (*ibid.*). Another conclusion: totally active, consciousness is totally spontaneous. And a further conclusion: such a consciousness is nothing at all. It exists only as it moves out of itself, towards objects. But if consciousness exists only as consciousness of objects in the world, if it has no "world" of its own to dwell in and draw objects into, this implies another trait. Consciousness exists only among objects: consciousness exists, as Heidegger says of Dasein, *only* in-the-world. And, as Heidegger knew, this is no passive waiting among objects. "Understand this 'being-in' in the sense of movement. To be is to burst into the world . . ." (p. 131). Unable to repose in an "inner life", unable to "contain" things, consciousness can only be seen as active and in the world from the outset.

Sharply different and separated from the world; existing only as an act towards objects; totally spontaneous and, strictly speaking, nothing; and existing only as it is among objects in the world – these are the traits of consciousness Sartre draws from his encounter with phenomenology. And all of this implies not just any world but a very specific one. The absolute separation of consciousness from the world means that we are "abandoned by our nature in an indifferent, hostile, and stubborn world" (p. 130). For we can no longer pretend that *we* constitute the world, that some sort of pre-established harmony exists between it and ourselves: it is out there, beyond us. Furthermore, by separating consciousness from its objects, Husserl has restored their independence and objectivity. Our various ways of becoming conscious cease to be mere subjective reactions: "they are only ways of discovering the world" (p. 131). After all, Husserl called for a description of phenomena *as they appear* to consciousness. Thus there is no noumenon, no hidden being lying behind the phenomena, to which we would react in a merely "subjective" way. The world *is* as it appears: "If we love a woman, it is because she is loveable" (p. 132).

II. Sartre's Self-Interpretation

"A fundamental idea of Husserl's 'phenomenology': Intentionality". But how well does Sartre's notion of intentionality fit with Husserl's? Not too well, as any student of Husserl knows. Sartre lifts the idea of consciousness' relatedness and activity from the more complete and complex context in which alone the idea had made sense to Husserl. Not even in *Logical Investigations* did Husserl see consciousness as a *pure* or *empty* act apprehending objects. In *Ideas* he specifically described a *whole series* of different acts, including, for example, presenting and judging – acts having common features as well as different

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

structures.[7] From the very beginning consciousness was a "world" for Husserl, with its ideal entities, structures, and acts. Not a container, but a structured, ordered way of shaping raw data into a finished world of experience, according to definite patterns and laws. Sartre, however, rejects these highly differentiated modes of aiming at objects, rejects them as we shall see because they would give consciousness structures, laws to obey, an Ego, and a host of pre-conscious processes. Instead he sees consciousness' acts as empty acts of a "nothing" engaged in "bursting" forth towards the world. Sartre's formulation, then, erases what phenomenology was all about for Husserl – that entire cognitive pre-conscious dimension. He lifts out, and preserves, a skeletal and rudimentary form of intentionality – a bare consciousness relating to an *already existing* world.

Is this an untenable distortion? In a sense yes, but Sartre claims to have a reason behind what he is doing. In developing his basic terms at the beginning of *Being and Nothingness* he clearly and self-consciously distinguishes between his view of intentionality and Husserl's. For him intentionality means that consciousness must be defined as transcendence – going beyond oneself toward the world. "This is Husserl's essential discovery."[8] But although Husserl discovered intentionality he became "totally unfaithful to his principle." What is it? "To say that consciousness is consciousness of something means that for consciousness *there is no being outside of that precise obligation to by a revealing intuition of something – i.e., of a transcendent being*" (emphasis added, *ibid.*). Husserl's "error" was to focus on consciousness as constitutive, containing structures, ordered acts and a transcendental Ego – making the world *depend on* consciouness – rather than seeing consciousness as spontaneous revelation of objects *outside of it*.

This, then, is the Sartrean self-interpretation: Husserl had a decisive insight – intentionality – but by setting up and exploring "structures of consciousness" all over again, he betrayed its fruitful implications, which could have led him directly to the *things themselves.* To break with Husserl's study of abstractions, to explore the concrete, that is the goal. "The concrete is man within the world in that specific union of man with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls 'being-in-the-world" (p. 3). Thus, in this view which Sartre shares with his commentator Francis Jeanson, it is Heidegger who influences Sartre to break with Husserl, to extract intentionality and throw it in the world.[9] Although Sartre doesn't make too much of Heidegger's influence in his very early works, in *Being and Nothingness* we see *Being and Time* on virtually every page. Thus that book begins by describing the *question* as a basic and characteristic human posture. Thus Dasein becomes the *pour-soi*, inauthenticity

7. See, for example, the Third and Fourth Sections of Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by W.R. Boyce Gibson (London and New York, 1931), especially pp. 212-356.
8. Jean Paul Sartre, *L'être et le neant: Essai d'ontologie phénomènologique* (Paris, 1943); trans. by Hazel Barnes as *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (New York, 1956), p. 61.
9. Francis Jeanson, *Le Problem Moral et la Pensée de Sartre* (Paris, 1947), p. 138.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

becomes bad faith, facticity and thrownness become contingency. Thus Sartre takes over the distinction between fear and anguish, the notion of Dasein existing in terms of its possibilities.

Heidegger emphasized Being-in-the-world, Husserl emphasized consciousness and its intentionality. Sartre's self-appointed task, then, seems to be to bring together the most fruitful themes of both thinkers into a total analysis, using each as a corrective for the other. Thus Husserl gets criticized for having "shut himself up inside the *cogito*" (p. 73), while Heidegger is taken to task for avoiding "any appeal to consciousness in his description of Dasein" (p. 85). We must study intentional consciousness, yes, but existing only in-the-world, among objects, amidst life-struggles.

III. Consciousness and the World

Consciousness-in-the-world. Most of Sartre's writings in the late 30's and early 40's are devoted to exploring the specific nature of each term and their interaction – with a heavy emphasis on consciousness. To fill in the enormous spaces left by "Une Idée", to show the logic behind the spectacular leaps he takes there, it is time we turned to his more limited and technical analyses.

In dealing with consciousness, Sartre is above all concerned with its spontaneity – his claim that consciousness is autonomous, absolutely self-determining, and free. Here, after all, we have one of the lenses through which Sartre looks at Husserl and Heidegger. What phenomenology casts into the world, according to him, is not simply man, or even consciousness, but *a totally spontaneous consciousness.*

The key question for Sartre in his studies of the 1930's is whether an existent determines itself. If it does not exist for itself and through itself (*pour soi et par soi*), then it necessarily exists as a thing. It obeys the laws of things, is determined by forces beyond its control: it is passive. There is no room for compromise. A spontaneity can tolerate no element of passivity, obey no laws, for it would then be determined *by* something else. It must be spontaneous through and through – containing no structures, states, or contents.

Spontaneity: let us follow Sartre in his quest of this theme as he sweeps from consciousness *everything* placed there by theories of imagination, of the transcendental Ego, of emotions. We have already seen Sartre mock "digestive philosophy" in "Une Idée". In *Imagination* he attacks the associationist theory of images – which, he argues, has insinuated itself into every theory of image-forming – for making consciousness into a *world* peopled by sense remnants. Consciousness may be passive in perception, Sartre suggests, but imagination remains a totally free and spontaneous act. In *The Emotions* Sartre attacks psychological and psychoanalytical theories, such as those of James and Freud, which would derive strong emotion from external, physiological, or subconscious forces – destroying our autonomy. And in *The Transcendence of the Ego* Sartre criticizes Husserl himself, rejecting his concept of a structured Ego standing behind consciousness and *causing* its cognitive acts. All these theories ultimately deserve the same charge: by placing structures or things *in* consciousness, they reduce consciousness itself to a thing. That is, any theory makes consciousness into a thing which evades its "monstrous spontaneity".

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sartre will not compromise this spontaneity by one iota. Both *Imagination* and *The Transcendence of the Ego* attack any notion of partial spontaneity as contradictory. Some thing-image theories, for example, had sought to accord with rationalist conceptions of self-determining reason by allowing thought free disposal over its passive sense-remnant images. But how can those semi-material things left in consciousness – as images were universally regarded – be controlled, evolked, or shaped by a mental process which is wholly immaterial? "Any inert and opaque content takes its place, by the necessity inherent in its type of existence, among objects, that is to say, in the external world" (*Imag.*, p. 116). Husserl's transcendental Ego, like the Freudian unconscious world, would make the conscious self the mere *recipient* of states constituted "behind its back", rather than their absolute creator and support. Being unaware of the structures lying behind itself, consciousness would have no control over them. A transcendental Ego lodged *behind* it, any structure not immediately visible to consciousness, "would slide into every consciousness like an opaque blade. The transcendental *I* is the death of consciousness" (*Tr. Ego*, p. 40).

So much for consciousness. Let us look at Sartre's account of the world. This much we already know: such a consciousness cannot create or constitute the world. It may only *encounter* things which are already there when it comes on the scene. It may label them, but it hardly constitutes them in any deeper sense and we know why: to be involved in the world is to become *like* it, passive, rigorously ordered, unfree. Here Sartre breaks with Heidegger. For the formula Being-in-the-world means that man and his world emerge simultaneously, whereas Sartre argues that consciousness' existence *depends on* the existence of things. For Heidegger the things lying about are not the world, for they are encountered and show themselves "only insofar as 'there is' a world."[10] Nor can we say that "man 'is' and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-being towards the 'world' – a world with which he provides himself occasionally" (p. 84). No, man is man insofar as he *forms* a world – a connected system of instrumental-objects with himself as their center of reference, with his survival being their ultimate purpose. Thus all dualisms, such as subject and object, consciousness and things, man and nature arise *afterwards*, on the foundation of Being-in the world: "The compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a unitary phenomenon. This primary datum must be seen as a whole . . ." (p. 78).

It is only from this starting point that Heidegger goes on to look at specific objects. Some objects are ready-to-hand – that is, they are usable. They exist as articulated, identifiable, useful pieces of equipment. On the other hand, an object may take on a "pure" quality of being-just-present-at-hand when its primary character – its instrumental character – is disturbed. It may become unusable, or broken; or perhaps a necessary piece of equipment is missing. Only then, when its "assignment" is disturbed, does the object stand out *by itself*, as conspicuous, as obtrusive, as obstinate. But as long as it remains usable the object "holds itself in" – it is not noticeable for itself. That is, on the primary ontological level we focus on the task and not on the object itself.

10. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York, 1962), p. 102.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And so Heidegger insists that pure thinghood, presence-at-hand – which Sartre regards as primary – is *not* the primary ontological character of entities: "To lay bare what is just present-at-hand and no more, cognition must first penetrate *beyond* what is ready-to-hand in our concern. Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorically" (p. 101). In discussion how we first encounter an automobile's directional signal Heidegger argues that we *do not* authentically see it if we just regard it as "a thing". We more likely, and more authentically, regard it as a piece of equipment whose *specific* use we have not yet understood – "as something ready-to-hand with which we have hitherto not known 'how to begin' . . . not as bare thinghood presented for an apprehension of what is just present-at-hand and no more" (p. 112).

Let us see how Sartre rejects this. Taking the term being-in-itself (*être-pour-soi, an-sich-sein*) directly from Heidegger, he reverses its meaning. He dwells on the *priority* and *independence* of the in-itself, which has no need of the for-itself to exist: "consciousness considered apart from the in-itself has no need of the for-itself in order to be . . ." (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 622). The in-itself *is*. It is prior to consciousness, which could not exist without "any more than color could exist without form or sound without pitch and without timbre" (p. 621). It is eternal and uncreated. "Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is *de trop* [superfluous] for eternity" (p. 66). First it is there, and *then* consciousness encounters it, making of it what it will.

And so Heidegger begins by focussing his attention on the active human project in terms of which things take on meaning, while Sartre begins by stressing the primacy of the thing. Being-in-the-world thus comes to mean being among things which are at the outset uncreated, superfluous, with no reason for being. Or, as Sartre says in "Une Idée", we are thrown by our very nature into an "indifferent, hostile, and stubborn world" ("Une Idée", p. 130). As long as Dasein is seen in Heidegger's terms as emerging only with the instrumental totality arrayed around it, Dasein remains the ultimate starting point and goal, *for whose sake* all tools exist and all actions are taken. Sartre, on the contrary, interprets Dasein as consciousness, but a very peculiar one – one which is totally spontaneous, empty, nothing. It cannot *act* on the world. Thus those things around it are independent of consciousness, have no connection with it. Thus they are simply there, present-to-hand, being-in-itself.

IV. An Argument with Sartre

A) Erasing Consciousness

But surely Sartre's arguments are wrong. Surely they don't meet his own Husserlian test, the test of experience.[11] Do I need special proof to point to epistemological processes, social processes, and psychological processes? They are all pre-conscious as well as conscious, they are all related as well as

11. See especially his critique of thing-image theorists in *Imagination*, pp. 85-126.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

apparently semi-autonomous. At any given moment any – or all – of them may remain unconscious, occuring virtually mechanically, happening *to* us although similarly issuing *from* us. For Sartre, however, there are no pre-conscious processes, there are no layers to consciousness, no centers of motivation. There is no *me* at the center of my thoughts, feelings, and actions. "Thus each instant of our conscious life reveals to us a creation *ex nihilo*" (*Tr. Ego*, pp. 98-99).

This is silly, as, for example, are so many of Sartre's characters in *Intimacy* – who act without motivation or explanation.[12] Anyone observing himself or other people can note consistent *patterns* of thought and action and feeling. Anyone observing himself or other people can point to different *levels* at which there are structures in consciousness – our feelings – and hidden feelings beneath those feelings – our social existence, our historical existence. Anyone with the barest psychological insight would admit that he or she often does things for internal and inexplicable – because unconscious – reasons.

In banishing structures from consciousness Sartre fails to see why such structures were discovered or conceived initially: to explain how we operate and to explain reality "out there". Hume's skepticism perfectly separated consciousness from the things of which it is conscious: he made clear that the structures we "perceive" are not in the objects themselves. He demonstrated that the world, seen as completely independent of and beyond us, gives no hit to how we experience it in a coherent and ordered way. In short, he showed that a world "given", "out there", contains in itself absolutely no reason for being intelligible to us. Philosophy had to look elsewhere to explain perception, cognition, the world's structure and science: to the active, constituting role of subjectivity. Now by erasing the structures of consciousness Sartre wreaks havoc with all of the concerns which originally gave rise to the search for those structures. How we come to have relatively secure knowledge of a world "out there" – the central problem of rationalism from Descartes through Hegel – becomes wholly obscured by Sartre's emptying act. All becomes objectivity, all becomes just what we are aware of at the moment; all becomes, I would say, equally inexplicable, equally unmotivated.

Thus all realities which the idealism he rejects explains through recourse to the structured activity of subjectivity become ejected into the world: and that world becomes a moody, implacable given. Thus, just as on the one hand our own actions become completely arbitrary, so on the other are we struck anew with the problem of the correspondence between our knowledge of the world and the world we know; Sartre leaves us to speculate about a mysterious preordained harmony or some direct godlike insight we have into the nature of things.

In his quest for total spontaneity, Sartre winds up by not only making behavior inexplicable but also by cutting us off from the very world we create, alienating us from it and it from us at the outset. But in one sense or another we do create the world. That is the simple fact: whether, on the epistemological level, presenting ourselves with a coherent, intelligible world; on the ontological

12. *Le Mur* (Paris, 1939); trans. by Lloyd Alexander as *Intimacy and Other Stories* (New York, 1948). See especially "Erostratus".

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

level, arraying a world around us whose very being makes sense only with a reference to *our* purposes; on the material level, engaging in the social activity of labor to create the world we live in; or on the psychological level, constituting the emotional tone and meaning of every moment of experience. This, the meaning of so many of the major currents in modern thought – including Kant, Hegel, Freud, Husserl, and Heidegger – is cancelled by Sartre's insistence on spontaneity.

B) Accounting for the World.

Now Sartre does not ignore all this or even deny it. In fact, he self-consciously fights against any conception that subjectively constitutes objectivity: "the world has not created the *me*; the *me* has not created the world" (*Tr. Ego,* pp. 105-106). And he self-consciously presents us with a world of unexplained absurd meaningless things and actions – that is the core of *Nausea.*

Why? First of all, in order to destroy the idealist notion that consciousness *is* the world, pure and simple. Here again, but now completed, is the outburst, in "Une Idée", where Sartre makes everything clear: "We have all read Brunschvich, Lalande, and Meyerson, we have all believed that the spider-mind attracted things into its web, covered them with a white foam and slowly digested them, reduced them to its own substance. What is a table, a rock, a house? A certain assemblage of 'contents of consciousness', an order to these contents. Oh alimentary philosophy! Nothing seems more evident however: isn't the table the actual content of my perception, isn't my perception the present state of my consciousness?" ("Une Idée", p. 129). Sartre's argument: to think that consciousness constitutes the world is to destroy the worldliness of the world, to suppress its material reality, its existence beyond consciousness. To *assert* its worldliness, on the other hand, means to assert its *total* independence from consciousness. But how could such a consciousness come to know and live in a world so drastically different and separated from itself? To explain our experience a new being, quite familiar to traditional philosophy, must be placed *before* consciousness – the for-itself. The for-itself negates the in-itself – presumably in regular, patterned, predictable ways – and so there emerges an ordered, structured world, so there emerges a consciousness which comprehends it. What is this if not the hidden return of pre-conscious constituting processes? Pushed out the front door ("If we love a woman, it is because she is lovable"), these processes are let in the back door – for without them a pure and clear consciousness would be left facing dumb, brute things to no result. But are we then to say that consciousness is the for-itself, that the world is the in-itself? Yes, according to Sartre's insistent logic – there are no levels, no special *a priori* structures, nothing *before* consciousness, no preconscious processes. No, according to any logic of intelligibility – for otherwise there would be no way of accounting for how the world appears as *already* structured, *already* intelligible. Thus does *Being and Nothingness* fluctuate: now speaking technically of the for-itself and in-itself as if Sartre were describing *a priori* ontological and epistemological levels; now speaking of people and things as if the whole matter were at bottom an everyday and worldly one; now speaking of consciousness and the world, as if there were certain technical epistemological problems to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

handled on a technical level before we can observe people's actual struggles. Thus, through a process of leaping and sliding from one level of analysis to another, does Sartre manage to account for all those things that are obfuscated by his insistence on consciousness' nothingness.

C) From Absolute Objectivism to Absolute Subjectivism

In Sartre's hands existential phenomenology wants to place consciousness in *direct contact* with what, we now see, has to be a finished, given world. Thus without ceremony consciousness is thrown into the world, to confront it immediately. "Thus, in a stroke, those famous 'subjective' reactions, hatred, love, fear, sympathy which floated in the foul-smelling brine of mind, tear themselves away, they are nothing but ways of discovering the world. It is *things* which are suddenly revealed to us as hateful, sympathetic, humble, lovable. It is a *property* of this Japanese mask to be terrible, an inexhaustable irreducible property which constitutes its very nature – and not the sum of our subjective reactions to a piece of carved wood" ("Une Idée", p. 131).

Consider what this means: I experience things directly as they *are*. Having no subjective, personal structure *through which* I respond to the world, I become omniscient. But at the same time I become impotent before a world which is completely reified – objective, independent of me, beyond my control. "Everything happens as if we lived in a world whose objects, in addition to their qualities of warmth, odor, shape, etc., had the qualities of repulsive, attractive, delightful, useful, etc., and as if these qualities were forces having a certain power over us" (*Tr. Ego*, p. 58).

Why? Because consciousness has no structures, plays no part in constituting the world of our experience. Thus all the qualities of that world lie out of reach, *in* the world, by themselves. "I pity Peter, and I go to his assistance. For my consciousness only one thing exists at that moment: Peter-having-to-be-helped. This quality of 'having-to-be-helped' lies in Peter. It acts on me like a force" (p. 56). Isn't it my *feeling* about Peter and his danger that drives me to help him? No: "There is an objective world of things and of actions, done or to be done, and the actions come to adhere as qualities to the things which call for them" (*ibid.*).

These formulations imply a thoroughgoing positivism which makes it impossible to ever get behind the facts to their human, social source: things are just as they appear. Sartre appeals to "the absolute law of consciousness for which no distinction is possible between appearance and being" (*Tr. Ego*, p. 63). Since I don't see an *I* in my urgency to help Peter the *I* does not exist, period. Since I don't see an *I* but rather the horrifying Japanese mask, the I doesn't exist. And the mask *is* exactly as I see it, or more generally, consciousness is completely aware of itself at every moment – that is another law of existence – thus, since I am aware of no subjective structures, no subjective structures exist. Why? Because the individual is the first thing that is intuitively given. History, society – all must come later, since they do not *appear* until later. They are never primary.

But often such realities are accessible to us or not according to our social experience, depending on what a certain structure of experience – the given

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

society's – makes self-evident to us and what it hides from us. Sartre's approach allows for no theoretical ground upon which to *go beyond* the distortions of experience, no theoretical platform from which to view the adequacy or inadequacy of our immediate consciousness of things, no way of arguing that something we do *not* immediately intuit may be more structurally *important* than something we do immediately intuit. No way to judge the *relation* between appearance and being.

Notice what Sartre has done: subjectivity, we saw a moment ago, counted for nothing to Sartre. But subjectivity just now has become the total judge of our experience: what *I see* is the truth. How is this turnabout possible? Because where any recourse to subjectivity is discarded at the outset appearance naturally becomes equated with being. Our perception of the world – not the world itself as it exists as it really comes into being, but our perception of the world, for example, as independent and hostile – becomes the measure of things. *Things are as we see them*, Sartre is saying, but at the same time he denies that our vision of them is merely *our vision* rather than things as they really are. Positivism: suppress the subject and you suppress any chance of understanding the world and our relation to it. And at the same time you elevate a distorted subjective impression of the world to the status of indisputable truth.

D) Absolute Freedom?

But what of Sartre's argument that the very spontaneous and self-determining nature of consciousness *depends* on its nothingness, its emptiness, its clarity to itself? What about our absolute self-determination, consciousness' spontaneity, its total freedom – doesn't my own critique of Sartre destroy all of that? Of course it does.

Or rather, my argument merely brings us closer to a simple fact of experience: if we are free "by nature", it is not at all in the way the early Sartre wants us to be. The issue, of course, is the very nature of consciousness – of that dimension of us which projects goals, feels, thinks, plans, reflects, orders experiences, perceives the world, becomes aware of ourselves, directs our work, communicates with others. I would rather use such terms along with *consciousness* for a simple reason: it locates that constellation of faculties in the only place it can exist – in our bodies, among other people, in the world. Does this sound like Sartre? There is one decisive difference between saying *we* are in the world, and are conscious of it, and saying *consciousness* is in the world. *We* are materially, socially, and historically conditioned: we can never be absolutely undetermined, absolutely spontaneous. All the ways of our awareness and cognition cannot help but be affected by the process in which they take place, which they limit and limits them, which they shape and shapes them. But as Sartre imports it from Husserlian epistemology *consciousness* does not sound worldly enough; it sounds like a visitor from philosophy's remote regions to our world, a visitor we are quite willing to permit special previleges and faculties – until we discover that it is none other than *our consciousness*, residing, of all places, in *our* bodies. Then it becomes clear: all our limitations are also its limitations. Now of course human beings are unique, unlike the material world but conditioned by and conditioning it. Thus consciousness is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unique. But Sartre is right – each one of its structures, its laws, its ties, its layers, its constitutive acts – even its corruption by the need to eat – takes away its "absolute freedom". But let us look at exactly what is at stake. Our consciousness' uniqueness consists in its intentionality – in the sense of projecting goals, ends, purposes, in defining and organizing situations in terms of them. Not some total spontaneity, not some absolute indeterminism – but rather the ability to see beyond the given, to sum up, to direct projects. Absolute freedom: does it make sense, given the fact that we live in a world among people, in our bodies? That freedom is, and always was, a myth: even my wildest and most spontaneous fancies of imagination are determined by and interpret my needs *here* and *now*, are structures based on my situation *here* and *now*. The very direction of Sartre's early analysis shows up in his absolute demand for the absurdity that it is: *Psychology of Imagination's* conclusion bases our wordly freedom *on* our freedom to withdraw; *Being and Nothingness* shows that freedom to be useless in overcoming our structural alienation from the world, to be indeed the alienation itself. Freedom? By making them total at one moment, Sartre is forced at the next to reduce consciousness' possibilities to virtually nothing. We are free to withdraw; we cannot overcome our alienation from the world and other people. Total freedom equals unreal freedom, useless freedom.

V. Deeper Meanings

A) Philosophy in the World

I have presented some key concepts of Sartre's thought but I have rejected them at each step. When someone's central positions are so often wrong, we should ask whether he isn't asking the wrong questions in the first place. And in fact, as I want to show in this section, it is *what* Sartre studies – the very nature of his proejct – that determines his results and failings. To explain this means now leaving his specific arguments and exploring the purposes of his philosophical project on the deepest and most general level. What, after all, is Sartre up to?

To begin with, the literary language and tone of "Une Idée" should tip us off to the character of Sartre's project. At first he seems to open up a fresh new current, an effort, reminiscent of Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, to talk of life *in terms of life*. Sartre, helped by Heidegger, is bringing Husserl's thought into the world: *existential* phenomenology. Thus he uses the most vivid and worldly language to convey the meaning of Husserl's insight. "The philosophy of transcendence throws us on the highway, in the midst of menaces, under a blinding light" (p. 131). I have called this essay "breathless"; this hardly exaggerates the tone of a concluding paragraph that ends by calling for us to look for objects and qualities "on the road, in the midst of the crowd, thing among things, man among men." Consciousness is an "escape", a "refusal", a "flight", a "connected series of explosions".

What does Sartre mean by using such striking terms to explain the relevance of Husserl's discovery? On the one hand he seems to be saying what so many renegade thinkers have said before him: the language of poetry, of literature, of the streets, is fitting for describing and philosophizing about human life. But this point must be qualified by the great distance between Sartre and, say, Nietzsche.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The purport of Nietzsche's poetic language, his anecdotal style, is to transform, to subvert philosophy itself. It is from one direction what Marx's social theory is from another: the end of philosophy. A glance at *Being and Nothingness* tells us how close Sartre is to Husserl and Heidegger, yet how far from any of the other thinkers mentioned: he is systematic, disciplined, comprehensive, and yet a *philosopher*. He seeks the most general, the primary, the timeless underlying structures of being itself. From those structures he will derive consequences for human life *in* the world: existential-ism. Truth is universal and *a priori*; it unfolds in an orderly, systematic way by an analysis of primary structures; everything can be shown, can be proven. Sartre's point is to create a "phenomenological ontology". Someone trained in the rationalist tradition might be a bit shocked and puzzled by Sartre's book, but the same someone would be utterly lost reading philosophers who have abandoned philosophy – Marx, Kierkegaard, say, or Nietzsche. These thinkers abandon the traditional problems, their forms and very concepts. Marx, for example, turns philosophy into social analysis: studying actual human social activity in history rather than searching for timeless and universal structures. But Sartre's break with tradition is far more modest; it is accomplished *through* Husserl's philosophy, not through the very subversion of philosophy itself. Thus even his "Marxist" *Critique* does not situate thought in *history*, but rather thought examines the universal structures which underly all history and make possible its "dialectical intelligibility". It is, in short, social ontology: Marxist philosophy. As Simone de Beauvoir says, the young Sartre wanted to bring philosophy – without it ceasing to be philosophy for a moment – into the world. *Philosophy* – that universal, timeless, systematic study of underlying structures – is now to explain our experience. And so it is no wonder that we see Sartre merely *including* literary terms, making use of literary style without carrying the integration any further.

Philosophy in the world: we see this strange juxtaposition of everyday terms and recondite analyses not only in "Une Idée" but in most of Sartre's works through *Being and Nothingness*. *Transcendence of the Ego* speaks, for example, of my desire to go and help Pierre of my waiting for a bus – alongside technical debates over the structure of the ego; *Nausea* presents, for example, philosophical ponderings about the very nature of being – alongside the most disgusting everyday scenes.

The point is, as Camus said of *Nausea*, that the two dimensions are not integrated.[13] Try as he may Sartre only intensifies the impression that he is lifting terms from a – properly – remote and – properly – technical realm of discourse and straightaway imposing them on worldly processes that have their own – and quite different – dynamic. It may be possible, as Lenin said, to make a dialectical analysis of a glass of water. But what we would be doing would be neither applying philosophy to the glass nor reading it in the glass; rather, we would be using tools developed by philosophical thought – such as the notions of contradiction, change and history – to help us study this specific glass of water in its specific situation. Anyone familiar with Sartre's account of the

13. *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip Thody, trans. by Ellen Conroy Kennedy (New York, 1968), see pp. 199-203.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dialectic between the self and Other knows that he has in mind something quite different: showing us through the study of the structures of being what forms human relationships *must take*, what their content *must be*. With Lenin's glass of water everything is still to be studied; with Sartre's self-Other dialectic the essential facts are already known. In the one case philosophy gives us tools to apply to specific situations, in the other, answers to impose on them.

Husserl quite properly studied a limited technical area; how certain processes of cognition give shape to a world we know. Quite rightly he leaves many questions unanswered, keeps them in brackets. The ultimate nature of reality, the meaning of life – all such questions are bypassed. We may quarrel with Husserl for separating cognitive processes from historical and social processes, and thus giving us the false sense that how and what we know has nothing to do with the forms of life that we live. Nevertheless, cognition is not immediately and transparently reducible to social functioning. It is a question of studying different levels, however correctly we may insist on their relatedness and the connections between them. And Sartre? Putting philosophy in the world cannot tell us about the world without a sustained study *of the world*. One cannot impose Husserl's insights on the world any more than one can impose Marx's or Freud's insights on the processes of cognition. *Existential-ism*: it is a rebirth of the urge, which we can see at the origins of Western thought, to explain the world by discovering a few key terms and applying them everywhere. But if nineteenth and twentieth centurh thought has taught us anything it is that the human world can be studied region by region, level by level, each in the terms proper to it. After a century of analysis of the psychological and social basis of human conflict, for example, Sartre totally ignores such study and instead tries to derive conflict from the very nature of being. What he is doing is simply silly. Whether he has not read Freud, say, or Marx – or a dozen other writers – or whether he feels he has *the* answer, he is regressing to a surprisingly primitive and reductionist mode of thought.

In fact, what he is doing is holding on to some form of academic philosophy – which has its own regions to study and its own answers to give – while trying to bring it *into* the everyday world so as to explain that to us. But after all, it will not work. Thus, where his writing succeeds, as in *No Exit*, he gives us characters whose conflict can't be explained in terms of the self-Other conflict. Garcin, Inez and Estelle struggle with each other not because they *must*, structurally, but because each wants to hide a very specific repulsive truth about himself from himself. A repulsive truth which might conceivably be faced and accepted, ending the struggle. So far, the play works: but, after all, they are in hell, and "hell is other people". Sartre's ontological claim, that they *must* so struggle gives them a fate, destroys their freedom as well as the ultimate meaning of the play. At its best Sartre's play lets reality have its way; but still it is framed – in setting, title, and conclusion – by philosophy-in-the-world. And when philosophy wins the play loses – because Sartre's philosophy is an imposition on reality, from outside, explaining and universalizing what less "philosophical" modes of analysis could account for in far more specific and fruitful terms.

The Sartre of these early works, then, is still trying to impose a philosophy on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the human world in order to explain it – long after Western thought had discovered history, psychology, society and the specificity of reality. Long after, that is, the culture had developed tools far more sophisticated and precise. Sartre's existentialism, I am saying, stems from a dual and contradictory commitment. We see the split commitment in *Being and Nothingness*: in its incredible mixture of down-home characters (the hiker, the homosexual who denies it and his friend who insist on honesty, the peeping-tom, the waiter who plays at being a waiter, the woman who denies her sexual urges) with playfully – and inexcusably – incomprehensible writing ("A totality indeed supposes an internal relation of being between the terms of a quasi-multiplicity in the same way that a multiplicity supposes – in order to be this multiplicity – an inner totalizing relation among its elements" [*Being*, p. 181]). He is trying to get *to the* world with a philosophical approach which is inherently unwordly: thus the contradiction.

B) Consciousness-in-the-world

I have just explored the meaning of half of Sartre's self-interpretation: philosophy will study man in the world. But we know that Sartre is not merely studying man-in-the-world ontologically – but he is interested in a much more exotic being, consciousness-in-the-world. Here is where, in his own view, Sartre agrees with Husserl against Heidegger: "Any study of human reality must begin with the *cogito*" (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 84). Man equals consciousness for Sartre, as much as most rationalist philosophy made man equal reason. This means, of course, that Sartre studies an abstraction whose social reality, whose body, whose historical being are to be added *later on*, as more or less accidental traits. Furthermore, he is not studying man as just any consciousness. We already know that Sartre sees his starting point as Husserl's intentional consciousness: *that*, after all, is what he's placing in the world.

But look a little more closely. Can we so easily declare Husserl's consciousness to be the same as my consciousness, say, of a university as a hierarchical and authoritarian institution? Or my consciousness of my nose itching? Or my consciousness of the meaning of Sartre's key terms? I think not. When Husserl talks in *Ideas* about acts which endow the world with meaning, he is dealing with specific cognitive layers of our consciousness – with what is in some sense a preconscious consciousness; a consciousness which is drastically different from the empirical consciousness that encounters those apparently ready-made objects. This explains my assertion in the last subsection, that Husserlian phenomenology is – quite properly – unworldly. For the consciousness he studies is – quite properly – pre-worldly. It is, in short, an epistemological consciousness quite different from my awareness of my itching nose.

What, then, does it mean that Sartre begins with the *cogito*? He insists, in "Une Idée" and the *Transcendence of the Ego* that "at long last" philosophy can study consciousness where it belongs, in the world. But from the perspective I have just been developing we can see Sartre doing something quite different: throwing into the world a form of consciousness derived from and appropriate to epistemological studies. A decidedly non-empirical, unworldly consciousness is, in a stroke, thrown into the world of peeping-toms and supercilious waiters.

In the last subsection I presented a general analysis of what is wrong with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sartre's effort to make philosophy *worldly*. Now we can see the more specific problem: Sartre is determined to make worldly a particular something which was never intended to be. He is trying to make worldly an obvious abstraction lying behind and remote from experience, the consciousness which makes *there be* a world.

Moreover, Husserl's consciousness is decidedly *interior*: he places the world in brackets in order to focus on consciousness' activity. So that under such study consciousness appears as an inner world sufficient unto itself. *Interiority*: that is a necessary trait of some stages of epistemological study. The world must be ignored in order to see how consciousness builds it up as a cognizable sense of objects. It is an artificial interiority which accompanies some phases of the field of study: which is why Husserl spoke of *bracketing* the world. Sartre takes a decidedly inward region of consciousness to pitch into the world. Interiority-in-the-world: it is a contradiction in terms. But doesn't this formulation convey much of the sense of Sartre's enterprise? An abstract construction of consciousness which could only make sense "in brackets" – totally spontaneous, nothing, containing no structures, being purely action – tossed into the world.

A philosophy thus generated would obviously be profoundly individualist. When Husserl speaks of consciousness he is not yet talking about any particular one: all the traits of specificity are bracketed out, in order to talk on the most general, universal level. Consciousness: cognitive consciousness in general. Anyone's, everyone's. Now putting that consciouness in the world means first locating it in *individual* men and women. It has become *their* specific consciousness, turning that universal emphasis completely around. In a single step Sartre moves from Husserl's abstract but universal interiority to a concrete but individual interiority: consciousness-in-the-world. What is most real, and determinative, Sartre's new emphasis is saying, is that realm *within* each individual, his own unique consciousness. Not, for example, his work – which is social – or his thought – which is general and objective – but his *consciousness*: that region within which his action is decided.

C) A New Dualism

Still, we know all too well that Sartre had reasons for seeing man as consciousness, just as he had reasons for seeing consciousness as intentionality and for stripping away virtually everything Husserl understood as consciousness and leaving nothing. In his view Dasein becomes "a thing-like; blind in-itself" *unless* it is consciousness (*Being and Nothingness*, p. 74). Man without consciousness is no better than a thing among other things. Consciousness is the source of all that makes him uniquely human: his spontaneity, his power of self-determination, his freedom in short.

Either/or: consciousness or things. Sartre has led us into a full-blown dualism: "that there are only two types of existence, as a thing in the world and as consciousness, is an ontological law" (*Imag.*, p. 116). Two substances; a mortal opposition between them; all of reality explained by them; with the main struggles of existence stemming from their relations.

Consciousness is spontaneous, things are passive. We have seen this to be the central opposition of human life. "One reality alone deserves to be called 'spontaneous': consciousness" (*Imag.*, p. 115). And ranged against it, totally –

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and necessarily – separated from it, is the world of things which are *not* consciousness. "Never could my consciousness be a thing, because its way of being in itself is precisely to be *for* itself; for consciousness, to exist is to be conscious of its existence. *It appears as a pure spontaneity, confronting a world of things which is inertness*" (pp. 1-2, emphasis added).

D) The Core of Sartre's Thought

We are now on famous ground. Sartre's existentialism, his inwardness, his individualism, his dualism have all appeared. Have we reached rock bottom? I would like to say yes, but it is still all too puzzling. It is asking too much to see these terms as the natural result of a somewhat questionable project. I prefer to take another step in the interpretation, one which lies in a drastically different direction. So far I have been dwelling on Sartre's *philosophical* project. But I must go beyond making it seem like Sartre the philosophy graduate wants to become worldly, but does so in a highly eccentric way. I want to show that his idiosyncracies stem not merely from his peculiar intellectual choices, but rather from something yet more basic: how he sees life. Even academics who are somehow "out of the world" live in that world, after all. We eat, live, struggle, love and suffer. After a century of social analysis and psychoanalysis, it should be safe to say that our "pure" technical attitudes towards the world are rooted in our life-experience. In one form or another. Even our projects and postures express how *we view* it.

I am well aware that the battle to establish this approach has yet to be won decisively. Still, those who doubt it can hardly reject my using it to get to the basic attitudes of Sartre, a man who everywhere asserts that technical questions are straightaway existential ones. If Sartre's puzzling ontology, after all, *leads him* to certain existential conclusions, why can't we reverse the argument's flow and explain the ontology *by* his existential attitudes? Sartre's strange project and its strange terms, I am saying, are at bottom his *attitudes towards the world*, formulated in technical philosophical terms and then imposed *back* on the world as the apparent results of philosophical study. At the end of this essay, then, I am reversing its entire line of analysis: our search for origins leads us to Sartre's conclusions. What he winds up with is where he started: man alienated from a hostile world, making halfhearted gestures to use his total but ineffectual freedom – then disappearing into art.

Sartre's depressing posture towards the world, supposedly legitimized in *Being and Nothingness*, appears side by side with the technical analyses and insights of his early works. *Nausea*'s insight into the absurdity of life and world, for example, connects that vision with a basic sense of gloom and sterility. Futile it may be, but Roquetin will try to order his existence through art. As Camus notices, there is no sense of power, of control, of vitality at the discovery: Roquetin's life is a drag, not a field open to his energy: Camus puts his finger on what is missing: "the realization that life is absurd cannot be an end, but only a beginning" (*Lyrical and Critical Essays*, p. 201). *The Emotions* gives us a bad choice: action in a *difficult* pin-ball machine world, or *escape* into unreal emotional outbursts. *Imagination* and *Psychology of Imagination* oppose perceiving to imagining. The inward, unreal activity is the free one: perception seems tainted with passivity. Imagining, after all, is the very *basis* of our

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

freedom, he says in the second book's conclusion – without which we'd be virtual things. Free – but to withdraw, free for unreality. We saw "Une Idée" claim that we are "abandoned by our nature in an indifferent, hostile and stubborn world" ("Une Idée", p. 130). Total freedom? The reader of any of Sartre's early stories or plays or novels can see him using it not to celebrate the newly-discovered field of human possibilities, but merely to ruthlessly attack those who pretend they are unfree. And the free? Their choices are either arbitrary and absurd (Mathieu Hilbert, Pablo Ibietta), self-destructive (Lulu, Lucien, Ivich), carry terrible consequences (Orestes), or are made in the face of impossible dilemmas (Eve in "The Room"). Nowhere do Sartre's discoveries quicken life, give us a sense of possibility. And no wonder: behind the appearance of absolute freedom lies the ultimate impossibility of overcoming our structural problems. Thus the "free" characters of *No Exit* are forced to reproduce their hell from now to the end of time. Thus the aesthetic, the unreal solution of Chapter II of *What Is Literature?* is Sartre's most serious answer to "man is a useless passion".

Whether absurd or deterministic, demanding or hostile, Sartre's world is oppressive. He explores, in the 30's as well as in his more recent autobiography and biographies ways of *escaping* the world, ways of retreating into unreality in order to transform the world without directly acting on it. From his early writings to *L'Idiot de la Famille* he rarely explores vigorous, direct action – and then only to dismiss it as useless or to show its traps.

I think we have now reached the core of Sartre's thought: our freedom never touches the world. It is only consciousness' power of self-transformation into something unreal. The world is to be fled, not changed. Yet – is he chuckling ironically as he says this? – we are totally free. What then do we make of existentialism, philosophy *in* the world? From *Imagination* through *L'Idiot de la Famille* it is largely a study of patterns of withdrawal, or of situations so bad as to demand withdrawal. The main motive of consciousness-in-the-world seems to be to get out of the world. Tucked away in its freedom, threatened by an overbearing existence, consciousness "cannot act on anything but itself" (*Imag.*, p. 115). In *The Words,* Sartre admits his "natural place" is six floors above Paris, "in the rarefied air of belles-lettres: I love in the air out of habit, and I poke about down below without much hope."[14] Without much hope: even the occasional enthusiasm seen in several of Sartre's early works is not enthusiasm about life, but about discovering intellectual approaches to life. For the rest, the world-vision behind this "new" philosophical approach is relentlessly gloomy.

VI. Has Sartre Changed?

But this is no fitting way to end a study of Sartre, the partisan of "littérature engagé", the writer of Marxist philosophy and political essays, executive president of the Russell Peace Tribunal, the supporter of French Maoists and

14. *Les Mots* (Paris, 1964), trans. by Bernard Frechtman as *The Words* (New York, 1964), p. 38.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American Weathermen, philosopher willing to take to he streets. After all, I stop with the early Sartre, who, lost in his personal visions, had not yet discovered history, society, or human struggle. In a 1969 interview with the editors of *New Left Review*, Sartre agrees with most of my criticisms: agrees that the simple and total call for freedom was a distortion: "For my state of mind during those years, I think that the first plays I wrote are very symptomatic: I called them a 'theatre of freedom'. The other day I reread a prefatory note of mine to a collection of these plays – *Les Mouches, Huis Clos* and others – and was truly scandalized. I had written: 'Whatever the circumstances, and whatever the site, a man is always free to choose to be a traitor or not . . . ' When I read this I said to myself: 'it's incredible, I actually believed that!' " But what then has the later Sartre done to consciousness' total spontaneity and absolute freedom? It has been limited, put in its place by "the true experience, that of *society*": "But I think it was necessary for me to pass via the myth of heroism first. That is to say, the pre-war personage who was more or less Stendahl's egotistical individualist had to be plunged into circumstances against his will, yet where he still had the power to say yes or no, in order to encounter the inextricable entanglements of the post-war years as a man totally conditioned by his social existence and yet sufficiently capable of decision to reassume all this conditioning and to become responsible for it. For the idea which I have never ceased to develop is that in the end one is always responsible for what is made of one. Even if one can do nothing else besides assume this responsibility. For I believe that a man can always make something out of what is made of him. This is the limit I would today accord to freedom: the small movement which makes of a totally conditioned social being someone who does not render back completely what his conditioning has given him. Which makes of Genet a poet when he had been rigorously conditioned to by a thief."[15] After our labors in this essay we should be pleased to see that Sartre has caught on, recognized and rectified his own errors. But such a change of thought carries with it its own problems. What, for example, happens to the underlying terms with which Sartre anchored his ideas? What becomes of his basic posture towards the world? Nowhere does he directly re-fashion those terms. Can one then speak of a continuity between early and late Sartre? Doesn't *The Words*, after all, reveal Sartre's perpetual fascination with withdrawal, doesn't his recent preoccupation with Flaubert, who "is the imaginary", indicate that Sartre has not given up the dualism, the sense of an unbearable world which leads one to withdraw into the freedom of art? Doesn't the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* merely reinstall all the basic early terms in new clothing: *l'homme de besoin* in place of consciousness or *pour-soi*, the practico-inert in place of the dumb, brute in-itself?

In short, many questions remain, questions which will be answered only by a full length study of Sartre's relationship with reality. That is indeed the theme of the work in progress of which this essay is a chapter. I have after all devoted all this energy to ferreting out Sartre's original project, posture, and terms, because

15. "Itinerary of a Thought: Interview with Jean Paul Sartre", *New Left Review* no. 58, pp. 44-45.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I am convinced they stay with him into the present. I am convinced that his recent self-interpretation, like the earlier one noted in section II above, distorts Sartre's real project. I am convinced that Sartre's relations with reality always remain a fundamental problem for him, that in *The Words* he presents his truest self-description: " . . . one gets rid of neurosis, one doesn't get cured of one's self. Though they are worn out, blurred, humiliated, thrust aside, ignored, all of the child's traits are still to be found in the quinquagenarian" (*The Words*, p. 159).

Still, I must be fair: Sartre has indeed changed in many ways. I want to conclude this essay with some suggestion of how. We have already seen his illuminating self-criticism and redefinition of terms. Human beings, he is saying, can be "thick" with determinations and yet be free to become responsible for them, to go beyond them. Gone is the dualism, gone is the insistence on total spontaneity, gone is Sartre's narrow effort to import epistemological consciousness into the world. He now talks everywhere about man.

The earlier Sartre wrote with an extremism based on his conviction that only a totally free consciousness had any freedom at all. This is drawn from a view of a world where a man is one entity among other mechanically determined entities which threaten him on all fronts. Consciousness, then, is the indeterminate pole of being in a deterministic universe. Beseiged on all fronts, its "absolute freedom" is really a posture of rejection, flight, escape, withdrawal into imagination and art.

In his later thought, on the contrary, Sartre sees consciousness as embedded in existence – directing it, guiding it, becoming aware of it, not merely rejecting it and fleeing it. He has discovered a secure source of consciousness' uniqueness, and thus need not *oppose* it to things,need not make it *nothing*. We have just now seen Sartre talking about consciousness (man) *going beyond* the given, becoming aware of it and transforming it according to human needs, never passively accepting or being mechanically imposed upon, never simply reacting but always creating a new situation. I don't simply become what the world makes me, I form purposes, organize the world according to my goals. Man, in short, is intentional: not in the sense of a negative unconditioned act, but in the sense of being he who formulates goals and acts according to them. Not detachment, but involvement is the key to this intentionality: praxis. In large part, then, the older Sartre accepts living in the world. Completely? Ah, there is the problem. In a 1971 interview he calls for intellectuals to drop what they are doing and engage themselves in radical politics – a few weeks after publishing a 36 page *Introduction* to a study of an "imaginary person" – Flaubert. Fascinated with withdrawal, involved in politics. That is the similarity, that is the change.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARX AND BLOCH: REFLECTIONS ON UTOPIA AND ART

by

Maynard Solomon

> "Smile not at the fantasy of one who foresees in the region of reality the same outburst of revolution that has taken place in the region of intellect. The thought precedes the deed as the lightning the thunder."
>
> Heine[1]

> "But far more mightily than by the past, is the mind influenced by the future; the former leaves behind only the quiet perception of remembrance, while the latter stands before us with the terrors of hell or the happiness of heaven . . . [T]he future is the empire of poetry . . ."
>
> Feuerbach[2]

> "The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future."
>
> Marx[3]

Part I

Lenin described the three sources and chief component parts of Marxism as German idealist philosophy, British political economy and French Utopian Socialist thought. In this he was only reiterating and systematizing the many acknowledgements by Marx and (especially) Engels of their debts to their predecessors. Curiously, and no doubt inevitably, however, this piety took the form of negation, and not in the Hegelian sense of cancellation-transcendence-preservation. During the Kautskyist and Stalinist periods the component study of Marxism, and the representatives and symbols of those sources – including Utopianism – were anathematized. Marxism was said to have progressed from Utopia to science, to have rationalized the irrational elements in all prior systems. In the process, Utopian thought was rejected as unscientific, fantastic and reactionary.

Accordingly, there is some controversy as to the legitimacy of the Utopian strain in Marxism, which can only be dealt with by a clarification of Marx' and

---

1. Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (Boston, 1959), p. 160.
2. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Religion* (New York, 1873), p. 61.
3. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* [hereafter abbrev. *SW*] (Moscow, 1969-1970), I, 400.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Engels' attitude toward Utopia. Simply put, the founding Marxists paid homage to the brilliant insights and critical formulations of their Utopian predecessors – especially Fourier, Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, and Weitling – while simultaneously branding as reactionary the schematic programs and representations of the form of furure society both by the great Utopians and (mainly) by their sectarian disciples. Engels' critique in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* was aimed at the Utopians' unhistorical blueprints for the future: "These new social systems were from the outset doomed to be utopias; the more their details were elaborated, the more they necessarily receded into pure phantasy."[4] The anti-Utopian passages of *The Communist Manifesto* similarly are thrusts against the programs of Owenite and Fourierist sects: "Such phantastic pictures of future society, painted at a time when the proletariat is still in a very undeveloped state and has but a phantastic conception of its own position, correspond with the first instinctive yearnings of that class for a general reconstruction of society."[5] Marx, in a letter to Sorge on October 19, 1877, spoke of Utopian socialism's "fancy pictures of the future structure of society" as "silly, stale and basically reactionary."[6] The critique of Utopia is political and historical: "These sects act as levers of the movement in the beginning, but become an obstruction as soon as the movement outgrows them . . . [W]e have here the infancy of the proletarian movement, just as astrology and alchemy are the infancy of science . . ."[7] Engels' most exact statement concerning this aspect of Utopia is in his articles on *The Housing Question* (1873): "To be utopian does not mean to maintain that the emancipation of humanity from the chains which its historic past has forged will be complete only when the antithesis between town and country has been abolished; the utopia begins only when one ventures, 'from existing conditions,' to prescribe the *form* in which this or any other antithesis of present-day society is to be resolved."[8] Korsch believes that Marx's quarrel with the Utopian socialists is not "inspired by their idea of a future commonwealth totally different from the present state of contemporary bourgeois society." On the contrary: "the weakness of the Utopian socialists lies in the fact that, in attempting to portray a socialist future, they at bottom only idealized the existing conditions of society, leaving out the shadows."[9]

Marx paid tribute to Utopianism in his letter to Kugelmann of October 9, 1866: " . . . in the utopias of a Fourier, an Owen, etc., there is the anticipation and imaginative expression of a new world."[10] Engels wrote of "the inspired ideas and germs of ideas which everywhere emerge through their covering of phantasy . . ."[11] And in the *Manifesto* the "critical element" of Utopian

4. *SW* III, 119.
5. *SW* I, 135.
6. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895* (New York, 1942), p. 350.
7. *SW* II, 271.
8. *SW* II, 368-369.
9. Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx* (New York, 1963), p. 53.
10. *SW* II, 417.
11. *SW* III, 120.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought is stressed: "They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class."[12] The founding Marxists opposed the schematic programs and universal panaceas of the Utopians but not the revolutionary core of Utopian thought.[13] Their critiques referred to ideas or schema which were in principle unrealizable. Lenin used the word exclusively in this sense: "Utopia is a Greek word, composed of *ou*, not, and *topos*, a place. It means a place which does not exist, a fantasy, invention or fairy-tale. In politics, utopia is a wish that can never come true – neither now nor afterwards, a wish that is not based on social forces and is not supported by the growth and development of political, class forces."[14] But while Marxism specifically rejected this aspect of Utopia, it simultaneously incorporated both the critical and the anticipatory tendencies of Utopianism. As Bloch writes: "All Utopias, or nearly all, despite their feudal or bourgeois commission, predict communal ownership, in brief, have socialism in mind." In the utopias, he continues, there "came to expression the expectant tendency that permeates all human history. Only in Marxism, however, did it find concrete expression, precisely because Marxism disclosed the real possibilities. And Marxism also reveals totality . . . which is the method and the subject matter of all authentic philosophy. But for the first time this totality appears not as a *static*, as a *finished principle* of the whole, but rather as a *utopian*, or more precisely, as a *concrete utopian* totality, as the process latency of a still unfinished world."[15]

Karl Mannheim had earlier redefined "Utopia", thereby seeking to free it from the connotations of futility which both Marxism and bourgeois complacency had attached to it: "A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs . . . Only those orientations transcending reality will be referred to by us as utopian which . . . tend to shatter the order of things prevailing at the time." The Utopian consists of "those ideas and values in which are contained in condensed form the unrealized and unfulfilled tendencies which represent the needs of each age . . . The existing order gives birth to utopias which in turn break the bonds of the existing order, leaving it free to develop in the direction of the next order of existence."[16]

It is within this definition of Utopia that Marxism itself takes its place. Of greater significance, however, Marxism is the first philosophy to perceive and

12. *SW* I, 135.

13. Marx and Engels were opposed in principle to speculations on the specific details of the organization of future society; they did not wish to go beyond predictions of the downfall of capitalism. However, they were not always consistent in this: Engels ventures guardedly into predictive Utopianism in *The Origin of the Family*, and Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* – with its famous passages on the "withering away of the state" under socialism – is wholly within the predictive Utopian tradition, as is Lenin's *State and Revolution*.

14. Lenin, "Two Utopias", in *On Utopian and Scientific Socialism* (Moscow, 1965), p. 66.

15. Ernst Bloch, *On Karl Marx* (New York, 1971), p. 136.

16. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936); pp. 192, 199.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

insist upon the active and anticipatory (which is to say, Utopian) nature of philosophy itself, the first to transcend the contemplative role which had held sway from Plato through Hegel, keeping philosophy, as Bloch points out, "fixed *in a relationship to what was past* – a relationship built into all contemplation."[17]

The formulation of the process by which theory (rising from the specific conditions of a historical period) guides *praxis* toward a desired future was given by Marx himself in the course of his breakaway from Hegel. His solution of this problem occurs in the *Introduction to A Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843). Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* had insisted on the derivative, mirroring role of philosophy: "It is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age, jump over Rhodes."[18] And Hegel had fought the Utopian side of Philosophy with equal vigor: 'One word more about giving instructions as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed . . . The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk."[19]

For Hegel, activity was denied to the philosopher, and reserved to Absolute Spirit. Against the assignment of this passive role to philosophy Marx launched a major critique which insists upon the central and active role of the philosopher. Referring to Luther and the Reformation, he wrote: "as the revolution then began in the brain of the *monk*, so now it begins in the brain of the *philosopher*." And in his classic formulation: "Theory also becomes a material force when it grips the masses," Marx would (and did) liberate philosophy from contemplation and set it "at the service of history . . . to unmask self-alienation in its *unholy forms*." The proletariat *and* philosophy are the twin motors of revolution: "As philosophy finds its *material* weapon in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapon in philosophy . . . Philosophy cannot be made a reality without the abolition of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be abolished without philosophy being made a reality." Marx had discovered and maintained a delicate dialectical balance: philosophy, by itself, is incapable of revolution – "It is not enough for thought to strive for realization, reality must itself strive toward thought."[20] The separation of Marx from Hegel turns on the same issue as his separation from Feuerbach – the activity of the human subject.[21]

---

17. Bloch, *op.cit.*, p. 101.
18. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Knox translation (London, Oxford and New York, 1967), p. 11.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
20. This and the preceding quotations are from "Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right", in Marx and Engels, *On Religion* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 41-58.
21. Cf. *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism . . . is that the object, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marx returned to (and summarized) the critique of Hegel on this point in *The Holy Family*: " . . . with Hegel, the philosopher is only the organ through which the creator of history, the Absolute Spirit, arrives at self-consciousness *by retrospection* after the movement has ended. The participation of the philosopher in history is reduced to this retrospective consciousness, for real movement is accomplished by the Absolute Spirit *unconsciously*, so that the philosopher appears *post festum*.

"Hegel is doubly inconsistent: first because, while declaring that philosophy constitutes the Absolute Spirit's existence he refuses to recognize the *real philosophical individual* as the *Absolute Spirit*; secondly, because according to him the Absolute Spirit makes history only in appearance."[22]

Following Heine and other Left-Hegelians, Marx's Hegel-Critique examined the historical process by which Germany after Luther failed to join the bourgeois-revolutionary upsurge and instead fought out its battles in the realm of the superstructure (in its "cranium"), creating thereby a Utopian "dream-history" (Marx's phrase) which Germany – headed by its proletariat – must now seek to convert into reality.[23] Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* denied that philosophy could transcend its own genesis;[24] Marx affirmed the transcendent power of thought (indeed in that very philosophy which culminated in Hegel), analyzed the disproportion between philosophical "dream-history" and political reality, and discovered the process by which philosophy (and art as well, later

---

form of the *object* or *contemplation* but not as *human sensuous activity, practice,* not *subjectively*." (*SW* I, 13).

22. *The Holy Family* (Moscow, 1956), p. 115. For elaborations on this point, cf. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (London, 1970), p. 16 f, and Bloch, *op.cit.*, p. 110 f.

Marx's biographical receptivity to the idea of a revolutionary role for philosophy is worth exploring, for it is evident that as early as his letter to his father in 1837 and the *Doctoral Dissertation* of 1839-1841 the need to assert the discrete individuality of Karl Marx ("the real philosophical individual"?) was already beginning to emerge.

23. Hegel had anticipated his rebellious disciples on this point, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History:* "France has a sense of reality, of accomplishment, because ideas there are translated more directly into action; consequently men there have applied themselves practically to reality . . . In Germany the same principle aroused the interest of consciousness but was only developed in a theoretical manner. We have all kinds of commotions within us and about us; but through them all the German head prefers to let its sleeping cap sit quietly where it is and silently carries on its operations beneath it . . ." (cit. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy* [London, 1970], p. 40). Cf. also Karl Loewith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (Garden City, 1967), pp. 96-99.

24. Without pretending to enter into a discussion here of Hegel's philosophy as a whole, the crucial point in the present connection is that Marx took Hegel's categorical emphasis in the *Philosophy of Right* on the passive role of philosophy and *reversed* it, revealing the historical circumstances which lead to philosophical "dream-history" which in turn serves as the Utopian model of revolutionary transformation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxists would propose) propels the images of possibility into existence as models of social transformation.

Marx touched the essence of the matter in a letter to Ruge of September, 1843: "the world has long dreamed of something of which it only has to become conscious in order to possess it in actuality. It will be evident that there is not a big blank between the past and the future, but rather that it is a matter of *realizing* the thoughts of the past. It will be evident, finally, that mankind does not begin any *new* work but performs its old work consciously."[25] It may be time to use the term "Utopian" (or, perhaps, "Utopian Communist", in Engels' phrase) for this dialectical and materialist systematic philosophy.[26]

The Marx of the Hegel-Critique exploded what we may term the "historical determinism" of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in 1843. Was this, however, merely a transitional position, later repudiated or abandoned by Marx? Did Marx himself return to a historical determinism reminiscent of Hegel's own after he had become a "mature" Marxist? This, of course, would be the position of Louis Althusser, who believes that the "epistemological break" with Hegel and Feuerbach took place in 1845 and that "true" Marxism can be dated only from 1857.[27] That there is such an "epistemological break" is undeniable. Galvano della Volpe and Lucio Colletti properly place it in 1843, simultaneous with the Hegel-Critique, prior to the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. Adam Schaff cites Engels as placing the emergence of Marxism in Marx during

---

25. Marx, *The Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed., Lloyd Easton and Kurt Guddat (New York, 1967), pp. 214-215.

26. The purpose of such a restoration is not to return Marxism to a stage which it had already surpassed, but to re-emphasize the transcendent and revolutionary fundamentals of Marxist theory. A more thorough treatment of the dialectics of Utopia would have to take into account the negative aspects of certain forms of transcendent thought. Cf. Mannheim, *op.cit.*, for distinctions between Utopia and "counter-Utopia"; Harry Slochower, *Mythopoesis* (Detroit, 1970), for a contrast between myth and "mythopoesis"; Georges Duveau, *Sociologie de l'Utopie* (Paris, 1961), for a useful characterization of "left utopianism" and "right utopianism" and of the opposition between mythic thought and utopia. Bloch himself contrasts Utopia with "concrete utopia", as well as utopian with "utopistic".

27. Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London, 1969). Althusser's is an attempt to split off from Marxism many of the humanist, aesthetic and Utopian formulations of Marx's early works and to prevent the ongoing reconciliation of Marx with his predecessors. His is a difficult task, which he accomplishes only by blinding himself to the reverberations and confirmations of early Marx in the later works, by a Jesuitical avoidance of contradictory evidence (through the ruse of focusing on the extraneous detail), and by ruling obsolete the dialectical laws themselves. He writes that Stalin's "expulsion of the 'negation of the negation' from the domain of the Marxist dialectic" should be regarded as evidence of his "theoretical perspicacity" (p. 200, n.). This is not a minor point; for if the negation of the negation stands, then Hegel, Feuerbach, the Utopians, and pre-Marxist culture are all preserved in Marxism at the same time that they are superseded.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1841; this is surely too early, preceding by two years both Marx's adherence to Feuerbach and his conversion to communism.[28] Engels wrote, in his *History of the Communist League* (1855), that he himself had arrived at Communism during his first Manchester period (1843-1844) and that Marx had arrived at the theory of historical materialism and the class struggle in 1843-1844, specifically in the Hegel-Critique and his other contributions to the *Deutsch-Franzoesischer Jahrbuecher* of February, 1844.[29] The Hegel-Critique is committed to the concepts of class-struggle and the ideal of communism; Marx's critique of theology had already incorporated and transcended Feuerbach (although the language remains that of Feuerbach at his most eloquent and poetic).

Decisively, Marx himself wrote that "the first work which I undertook for a solution of the doubts which assailed me was a critical review of the Hegelian philosophy of law, a work the introduction to which appeared in 1844 in the *Deutsch-Franzoesische Jahrbuecher*, published in Paris."[30] He wrote this in the Preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* of 1859, in which the classic formulation of Marxism appears. And in the "Introduction" to that work he reaffirmed and reformulated the very same Utopian reflex by which imagination crystallizes the images of the desired mastery of necessity: "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and

---

28. That Marx's Hegel-Critique of 1843 marks a decisive reversal in his own thought may be seen by the following from "The Leading Article in No. 179 of the Koelnische Zeitung" of July 1842:

"But philosophers do not grow out of the earth like mushrooms; they are the fruit of their time . . . The same spirit that builds philosophical systems in the brain of the philosopher builds railroads by the hands of the workers. Philosophy does not stand outside the world any more than man's brain is outside him because it is not in his stomach; but philosophy, to be sure, is in the world with its brain before it stands on the earth with its feet . . . [E]very genuine philosophy is the spiritual quintessence of its time . . ." (Easton and Guddat, *op.cit.*, p. 122).

There is no essential difference between this view and Hegel's in his *Philosophy of Right*. The break with Hegel was still to come.

29. *SW* III, 178. Engels is, however, not always consistent on this point. In the Preface to *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888) he dates the working out of the materialist conception of history to 1845, and writes that the *Theses on Feuerbach* are "the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook" (*SW* III, 335).

For a useful distinction between "ideological communism" and "scientific communism" in early Marx, cf. Auguste Cornu, "Hegel, Marx and Engels", in *Philosophy for the Future*, ed. Sellars, McGill and Farber (New York, 1949), p. 55.Cornu marks the emergence of the former in Marx's essays for the *Deutsch-Frauzoesischer Jahrbuecher*, noting that the transition to a scientific communism instilled with the content of political economy and French socialist thought occurs in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, *The Holy Family* (1845), and the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845).

30. *SW* I, 503.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature."[31]

There are other confirmations in the "mature" Marx of his early insistence on the transcendent power of the imagination. In the *Eighteenth Brumaire* he described how bourgeois-revolutionary movements clothe themselves in the heroic traditions of the past, and commented: "Thus the awakening of the dead in those revolutions served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; of magnifying the given task in imagination, not of fleeing from its solution in reality; of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk again."[32] Here, Marx sees the past not merely as the dead nightmarish weight of inherited evils (as in the Preface to *Capital* and elsewhere) but as providing the imagination with the means of advancing the revolutionary struggle – the return to a heroic past in order to achieve a breakthrough to the future.

But Marx could not abide the possibility that self-deception might be a necessary motor of proletarian revolution. He therefore went on to criticize those earlier revolutions which "required recollections of past world history in order to drug themselves concerning their own content," and he insisted on the necessity for stripping away "all superstition in regard to the past." The proletarian revolution must proceed without masks, without the narcoticism of deceptive disguise: "The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. . . . In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead." (Here, Marx appears to abandon the reference backward without which no vision of the future is comprehensible.) Marx simultaneously recognizes the Utopian anticipation of future stages of human progress as well as the weight of accumulated traditions and reified forms which prevent humanity from moving toward that very future.

It is in his observations upon the labour-process, however, that Marx fixed the power of the imagination as the irreducible factor which separates man from the lower orders of living things. His interest in this had been aroused as early as 1837, when he read Samuel Reimarus on "the artistic impulses of the animals."[34] His first Marxist references to this subject occur in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*: "Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness . . . Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity. It is just because of this that he is a species being . . . [A]n animal . . . produces only under the domination of

31. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago, 1904), pp. 310-311.
32. *SW* I, 309.
33. *Ibid.*, 310.
34. Reimarus, *Allgemeine Betrachtungen ueber die Triebe der Tiere, hauptsaechlich ueber ihren Kunsttrieb . . .* (Hamburg, 1760). Cf. Marx, letter to his father, November 10, 1837, in Easton and Guddat, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

immediate physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom . . . Man therefore also forms things in accordance with the laws of beauty."[35] The classic statement is in *Capital*: "What distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect *raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality*. At the end of every labour-process, we get *a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement*."[36]

Marx's discovery that the labour-process consists of materializations of goal-projections (concretizations of the imagination) constitutes the basis for the formulation of all applications of Marxist theory – whether of aesthetics, philosophy or politics. For in Marxism the labour-process is the model of all social activity, and the teleological element in the labour-process demarcates human labor from instinctive animal labor.[37] The liberation of mankind turns on this issue: "Really free labour," writes Marx in the *Grundrisse*, "gives up its purely natural, primitive aspects and becomes *the activity of a subject controlling all the forces of nature in the production process*."[38] It is at this visionary juncture that man determines his own destiny and eliminates the split between himself and nature: "Man therefore becomes able to understand his own history as a *process*, and to conceive of nature (involving also practical control over it) as his own real body."[39]

In one of his very last manuscripts, the *Abstract of Morgan's Ancient Society* (1880-1881), Marx paid his final tribute to the overleaping potentialities of "the imagination, that great faculty so largely contributing to the elevation of mankind. . . ."[40] In the 1843 Hegel-Critique he had uncovered the goal-projecting power of philosophy's dream-world, which, however, he then saw as arising from historically-derived conditions of political backwardness; in his mature work Marx revealed imaginative anticipation to be inherent in the labour-process

---

35. Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan (Moscow, n.d.), pp. 75-76.
36. Marx, *Capital* (New York, 1947). I, 157. Italics added.
37. *The Dialectics of Nature* (New York, 1940) contains Engels' extended comments on man's self-creation through the labor process: "Man is the sole animal capable of working his way out of the merely animal state – his normal state is one appropriate to his consciousness, *one to be created by himself*" (p. 187); "Labour . . . is the primary basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself" (p. 2); ". . . the animal merely *uses* external nature, and brings about changes in it simply by his presence; man by his changes makes it serve his ends, *masters* it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals . . ." (p. 291). Lukács – perhaps in response to Bloch's reopening of the teleological aspect of the Marxist dialectic – explores the subject in a brilliant essay of his final years, "The Dialectics of Labor: Beyond Causality and Teleology" (*Telos* no. 6, Fall 1970, pp. 162-174).
38. Marx, *The Grundrisse*, ed. David McLellan (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London, 1971), p. 124. Italics added.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
40. Marx and Engels, *Ueber Kunst und Literatur* (Berlin, 1967), I, 238, 624.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itself. He touched on the applications of this pattern to mythology and revolutionary ideology, but the extension of the theory to art and literature was never undertaken by Marx.[41]

In Marxism, art is a product of divisions within the material productive base; simultaneously, it is a precipitate of human desires capable of a role in the nullification of the material base by means of its consciousness-altering essence. Art simultaneously reflects and transcends: Marxism is concerned with the trajectory of art as well as with its sources. Art's ability to transcend the historical moment was of special concern and interest to Marx; he wrote: "But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epos are bound up with certain forms of sociali development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment."[42] It has remained for 20th century Marxists to take up the question anew and to indicate some of the ways in which art serves as a vehicle of the dynamically active subject in history.

Part II

> "The Golden Age, which blind tradition has placed in the past, is in the future."
>
> Saint-Simon[43]

> "The real genesis is not at the beginning, but at the end . . .
>
> Bloch[44]

41. Marx never applied this thesis to art, although he was keenly aware of the disproportion between artistic development and material progress. Since the parallelisms between art and mythology or art and philosophy are on the surface, one wonders why Marx did not make the connection himself. Perhaps this is the byproduct of Marx's own biographical development, in which his artistic proclivities were almost wholly suppressed, and his numerous attempts at aesthetic exploration were aborted. Apparently, poetic creation represented formlessness, chaos (and perhaps danger) to Marx. Writing to his father in 1837, he refers to the "broad and shapeless expression of unnatural feeling" which permeates his early poetry: "Everything real grew vague," he wrote, "and all that is vague lacks boundaries." After he had undergone a brief emotional crisis, and burned his poems and novellas, Marx attempted to channel his creativity into a supposedly less chaotic, more ordered and rational field of study – that of philosophy. Recognition of the Utopian kinship between art, philosophy and mythology might have forced the realization that he had escaped one biographical "dream-world" only to find himself in another of essentially identical psychological nature. Indeed, Marx's general avoidance of philosophy-as-such in his last decades may indicate that he came to just such a realization, and moved on to political economy (surely *there* was rationality!) as a haven from philosophy as well as art.

42. Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 311-312.

43. Epigraph of *Discourses, Literary, Philosophical and Industrial.*

44. Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1959), p. 1628.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ernst Bloch was born in Ludwigshafen, German, in 1885. He studied philosophy in Wuerzburg, Berlin and Heidelberg. Like Lukacs and Max Raphael, he studied with Georg Simmel, and joined the Heidelberg group which included Lukács, Jaspers and others. He moved to Switzerland when the war broke out and there wrote his *Geist der Utopie* (published 1918), in which he posits an "inherent utopian tendency" and draws sustenance from Marx's proposed "alliance between the poor and the thinkers" in order to create a Messianic revolutionary philosophy in which we "paint images of what lies ahead, and insinuate ourselves into what may come after us." Bloch's was still a Talmudic-German version of that Christian Socialism which swept the western world at the *fin-de-siecle* and was laid to rest by the cataclysm of imperialist war and socialist revolution. But Bloch is here just emerging; as he says, his book "makes no peace with the world"; he is at the beginning of a quest for "the *external* interpretation of the daydream, the *cosmic* manipulation" of the utopian principle; his eye is on a paradise beyond paradise, and he does not (nor will he ever) settle for "the Marxist fixation on an atheistic *status quo* that offers the human soul nothing but a more or less eudaimonistically furnished 'heaven on earth' without the music we ought to hear from this effortlessly functioning economic and social mechanism."[45]

Bloch returned to Germany and lived as a free-lance writer in Munich and Berlin, where he was at the center of the circle of Communist and Marxist intellectuals and artists, a close friend of Walter Benjamin, Brecht and Kurt Weill, writing numerous articles on political, philosophical and aesthetic subjects which were later collected in *Durch die Wueste* (1923), *Spuren* (1930) and *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935). His *Thomas Muenzer als Theologe der Revolution* (1921) continued the exploration of Utopia, as did his studies of chiliastic trends within the German Peasant War (1921).

In 1933 he was forced to leave Germany. He resided in Prague, Vienna and Paris for several years, continuing to write on art and politics for the anti-fascist emigré journals. In 1938 he came to the United States, where (with the exception of his participation in the Third American Writers Congress of 1939) he devoted himself entirely to the composition of his three-volume major work *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1954-1959) and a related volume, *Freiheit und Ordnung: Abriss der Sozialutopien* (1946). In 1949, Bloch returned to East Germany, where he taught in Leipzig. There he wrote studies on Hegel, Avicenna and the concept of progress. He was involuntarily retired from Leipzig's Karl Marx University in 1957 because of the apparent unorthodoxy (and the theological component) of his Marxism. In 1961 he moved to West Germany where he has been teaching at Tuebingen University and writing expansions and popularizations of his philosophy of hope.

The influence of Bloch on the currents of Marxist thought commenced more than fifty years ago, shaping many of the concerns, directions and formulations of the early Georg Lukács, T. W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and socialist-oriented

---

45. Bloch, *Man on His Own* (New York, 1970), p. 38.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theologians, but the Fascist inferno blocked the concern for Utopia by focusing civilization's energies upon immediate self-preservation. In a sense, the Utopian strain could only be re-admitted and reconfirmed by Marxism after the 20th Party Congress of 1956, which put an end to the fiction of Utopia as "already present", and brought the questio of "When" and the philosophy of "Not-yet" to the fore.

The central concern in Bloch's philosophy is to fill the "place into which gods were imagined." (Bloch wrote: "Within there is a void that would be filled. So it all begins.") Juergen Habermas has put this well: "God is dead, but his locus has survived him. The place into which mankind has imagined God and the gods, after the decay of these hypotheses remains a hollow space. The measurements-in-depth of this vacuum ... sketch out the blueprint of a future kingdom of freedom."[46] For Bloch, this space into which man had projected his inner longings, must remain open "for a possible, still undecided reality of the future." Here, in the "superstructure in the superstructure" is that open terrain of "*what lies ahead*, the novum in which the mediated train of human purposes continues."[47] Here is the topos of Utopia, into which are projected the visions of a kingdom of freedom as a defense against chaos, against the "latency of nothingness."[48] Atheism (Feuerbach) opens up the place of the religious vacuum; Utopia (Bloch) fills the vacuum with the ideal of historical freedom – Communism. I think this may already have been implicit in Feuerbach, when he wrote that "the negation of the next world has as its consequence the affirmation of this world," and when he insisted that we must "modify our goals and exchange divinity, in which only man's groundless and gratuitous desires are fulfilled, for the human race or human nature, religion for education, the hereafter in heaven for the hereafter on earth, that is, the *historical future*, the future of mankind."[49]

Bloch has not gone beyond Feuerbach in one important respect: for Feuerbach (before Frazier and Freud) had glimpsed the psychological and anthropological ground out of which religious projection emerges. With Feuerbach, religion rises from the socially-conditioned compound of fear-wish which confronts the primitive (and the child, though he did not draw the parallel) at the dawn, creating in him a feeling of dependency which could only be overcome by wish-projection into the void. "The needs and interests of uncivilized man are all below the belt ..."; [50] in religion "man looks for defences against what he feels dependent on ..."; "the secrets of religion find their solution and clarification not only in anthropology, but even in pathology as well."[51] It may follow from this that religion is one historically-determined aspect of the Utopian principle. God walked the earth as man and lay down

46. Jürgen Habermas, "Ernst Bloch – A Marxist Romantic", in *Salmagundi* no. 10-11 (Fall 1969-Winter 1970), p. 313.
47. *Man on His Own*, p. 223.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
49. *Lectures on the Essence of Religion* (New York, 1967), pp. 281, 284.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 34,35.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon the green grass before he ever ascended into that space in which Feuerbach and Bloch found him. That space of the deity had previously been filled – by the images of desire, of wish born of fear. The Utopian urge originates in the desire to restore an earlier state of gratification (in Freud and Ferenczi, the mother-infant Eden-eternity; in Engels, primitive matriarchal communism). Utopia arises biographically and biologically before it takes on the raiment of history.[52] If this is correct, then the rise of communal life and class society finds Utopia already at hand awaiting the repressive shapings and redirections of civilization. The first socially-molded form of Utopia is the magnified image of the biological Eden, seen as the Golden Age, Paradise before the Fall, before the intrusion of the Fathers. With the stratification of society and the formation of intellectual elites charged with the ordering of communal and class ritual, Utopia is deflected into the hereafters of organized religion. Only then does religion substitute for (suppress) Utopia. Man is compelled to accept as wholly formed and hypostatized the class-derived images of religious Utopia.

But the Utopian principle did not decay. During the millenia of religious channeling of Utopian desires into ritual, Utopia moved underground, into the folk traditions of the common people, into a synthesis of social and pagan-religious strivings. Utopia and the negative-theology of paganism merged; the outlaw and the Utopian hero became synonymous: Sherwood Forest is both the image of a tree-worshiping paganism and an archetypal image of Utopia – the shaded Eden of the British poor. The folk-tale and fairy-tale, Matty Groves and The Jew Among the Thorns, the avoidance of tragedy, the insistence on the happy ending, on the miracle of survival and the openness of future expectation keep alive man's attempt to lighten the burden of a supposed mythic (class) destiny. (Walter Benjamin: "The fairy tale tells us of the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare which the myth had placed upon its chest.")[53]

The church had harnessed Utopia to religious eschatology. With the bourgeois revolution, however, the entire force of dispossessed eschatology is released and reconverted into Utopia (Buber). Utopia explodes into philosophy and the social sciences – creating the foundations of Communist theory. Utopia surfaces in the ballad and folk-tale revival, and from the creative arts – where it had been kept alive within Don Quixote's Cave of Montesinos, in Kepler's Somnium, in Dante's Earthly Paradise, on Crusoe's island – and becomes the transcendent swan-song of an enlightened but doomed feudal aristocarcy. Utopia explodes into view once again in *The Magic Flute* and the *Caprichos*, in the *Grosse Fuge*, in Damuier's *Emigrés*, in the pre-Raphaelitism of Morris's Brotherhood, in

52. The closing lines of *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* indicate that Bloch himself identified communism as the fulfillment and re-creation of the earliest harmony: "When [man] has comprehended himself and has grounded his life in real democracy without renunciation and estrangement, then there arises in the world something which appears to us all in childhood, and in which none of us yet was – home."

53. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York, 1968), p. 102.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Goncharov's *Oblomov* (who says "No" to a progress which excludes beauty and love), in Dostoevsky's Myshkin, in Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo*, in Cooper's primeval forest, on Mann's *Magic Mountain*.

It is at this point that Utopia again undergoes the process of rationalization; Utopia becomes "science" (or science-fiction) – the projection of the tendencies of the present into the future, the extrapolation of contemporary experience into predictive portrayals of life on earth to come. Perhaps it is the dialectic of Utopia that it tends to be converted into science and is then negated to the degree to which it does not conform to history. But the pseudo-scientific Utopias (which Marx and Engels criticized) do not touch the essence of the Utopian spirit – the interweaving of fear and wish into a visionary future modelled on remembrances (imaginary or partially real) of the past. The Utopia of the common people existed before the Fall, before the origins of the monogamous family, private property and the institutions of the state. It resided in primitive communism, cleansed of the terrors of nature, remembered in the glow of memory as the time of unity with the mother and fraternity with the children. The "scientific" Utopias of Wells, of Bellamy, of Zamiatin, Huxley, Orwell, and the negation of Utopian transcendence in art – of Dante's *Paradiso*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, Blake's *Jerusalem*, Ibsen's *Gyntiana*. For Bloch, the masterworks of art (including the tragic) are Utopian by nature: "The permanence and greatness of major works of art consist precisely in their operation through a fullness of pre-semblance and of realms of utopian significance . . ."[54] The artistic concretizations of Utopian thought contain portions of the blueprints of history, those designs of the *novum* which Bloch seeks to make visible in his *Principle of Hope*.

We touch here (lightly) upon aspects of Bloch's Utopian aesthetic as summarized in his *A Philosophy of the Future*.[55] In the chapters entitled "The Meaning of Utopia" and "Utopia in Archetypes and Works of Art," Bloch writes

---

54. Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future* (New York, 1970), p. 94.

55. *Ibid.* The quotations which follow are from pp. 86-98. Bloch shares many of his most advanced views on art with a number of other Marxists of the 1930's – especially Breton, Malraux, Max Raphael and Walter Benjamin. One cannot speak of priority in this area, since their development of the legitimate implications of Marxism to aesthetics appears to have arisen concurrently out of the confluence of French surrealist and German Marxist emigre currents in the mid-1930's. Several members of this group (which we may term the "Parisian School") would hesitate to accept the word "Utopian" to describe their theories. Benjamin had no such hesitation: "Dreams, in which every epoch sees the images of that which is to succeed it, now show the coming age mingled with elements of ur-history – that is to say of a classless society. The experiences of this society, stored in the unconscious of the collective, join with the new to produce the utopia which has left its trace in a thousand configurations of life, from lasting buildings to the most fleeting fashions." (Cited from a draft of Benjamin's unfinished book on Paris, in T.W. Adorno, *Prisms* [London, 1967], pp. 237-238.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that dreams rise from unfulfilled wishes; the night-dream is a journey into the past; the daydream is a means of "overtaking" the future, "concerned with an as far as possible unrestricted journey forward," projecting the "images of that which is not yet" into existence.[56] Utopian thought is born and takes externalized shape in a variety of territories – the "geography" of Utopia – which fills life and art and philosophy and science with its projections. Utopian thought is exempt from the rule that ideology reflects the ruling class, because its connection with its own time "is always negative." Unlike ideologies, Utopias "do not vindicate and proclaim the ruling class of their society." The great Utopians speak "on behalf of the *coming* bearers of society, and for the particular *tendency to come*." And Utopia is exempt from the superstructural decay to the extent that its ideas are "not yet," for "only that which has never yet come to pass never grows old."

Here we encounter a major difficulty in Bloch's ontology. In splitting the daydream from the night-dream, and in exempting Utopian projections from any necessary connection with the ruling class, Bloch fails to provide the psychological and the historical mechanisms by which wishes clothe themselves in futuristic patterns. The unfulfilled wish of the present cannot generate a vision of the future, since the present (by definition) lacks those very elements which the wish seeks to possess; and the class which is "not yet" similarly cannot envision its own destiny except by reference to a past in which it itself did not exist. By implication, Bloch posits a self-generating idea. To avoid this crucial difficulty, he therefore proposes that the Utopian mode of thought finds its imagery in "the acquired of 'inherited' *basic images* of the imagination – the famous 'archetypes' " and radiant memories of a past Golden Age. This supplies the missing link, of course, but it breaks another link in the process, for it does not give any explanation of the origin of the mythic Golden Age. Surely these images of past Paradise are the stuff of Utopia; the archetypal heritage is acquired by the present as it is passed down through history. But it did not create itself; Jung and Mircea Eliade to the contrary, it was not there at the beginning, *in illo tempore*. Perception is memory. Dreams are memories transformed into wish-fulfillments. Utopia is formed from recollection: it cannot generate the future out of itself. Utopian thought arises from an attempt to *re-create* a biological or historical locus in which individual or collective gratification had (or was imagined to have) taken place. (Compare Marx: "*All* emancipation is *restoration* of the human world and the relationships of *men themselves*."[57]) Utopian tendencies rise from the gulf between reality and expectation (Paul Tillich) but the images of Utopia are shaped by the memory traces of the past. As Benjamin wrote, "Every feeling is attached to an a priori object, and the presentation of the latter is the phenomenology of the

56. "Freud studied what Bloch has called the *'Nicht-mehr-bewusst'*, that which has come to consciousness but has now passed into unconsciousness. Bloch has discovered the *'Noch-nicht-bewusst'* . . ." (Harvey Cox, Foreword to *Man on His Own*, p. 10).

57. Easton and Guddat, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

former."[58] Utopian goals arise from disharmony and dislocation (whether these be biological in substance or rooted in the family or social structure) and are achieved in fantasy as prelude to and model for a desired transformation of the individual or of society, a prelude which – when it finds no counterpart in reality – itself becomes part of the fantasy world of past gratification – for illusory gratification in turn is transformed into memory and thereby becomes "historical." Wish, by itself, is not Utopia. Utopia is not chaotic desire: it is *formed* wish, collectivized dream; its contents are the memories of fulfillment organized into imaginative futuristic structures. Marx, in a passage which we have already cited, knew this when he wrote that "the world has long dreamed of something of which it only has to become conscious in order to possess it in actuality."[59] Utopia, then, is the social materialization of unconscious desire at the juncture of its historical coming-into-consciousness.

Whether or not Bloch grasps the mechanism by which Utopia generates its projections of daydream upon the screen of the future is a secondary question. For he has recognized in the manifold historical forms of crystallization of Utopian consciousness the embodiment of anticipation, the vision of the horizon, the dream of the space which must be filled, the presembalance of the dawn, the window of the future. For Bloch, then, art is not bound by its temporality. A great work "does not perish with the passing of time: it belongs only ideologically, not creatively, to the age in which it is socially rooted." The concept of progress applies to history, to the forces of production and to the economic basis, but "it can be relatively invalid in the case of the superstructure."[60] For Bloch, art is a single, slender, swaying bridge to a classless Paradise. Progress in art is only apparently absent: art does progress toward completion (the achievement of Utopia as reality; i.e., the negation of Utopia). And because its goals have not yet come to pass it does not age. The eternity which stretches from our present prehistory to that history which we have not yet entered is informed with the artistic embodiments which keep the hope of history and fulfillment alive. Art is the bridge, the filament which has stored up man's capacity to "dream ahead" (*Traum nach vorwaerts*), awaiting release of its energies by renewed contact with a revolutionary audience. Max Raphael gave the exemplary formulation of this irreducibly central position of Marxist aesthetics: " . . . art is an ever-renewed creative act, the active dialogue between spirit and matter; the work of art holds man's creative powers in a crystalline suspension from which it can again be transformed into living energies."[61] If the thread were to be severed, Not-yet would become never. Bloch's "principle of

58. Cit. Frederic Jameson, "Walter Benjamin, or Nostalgia", in *Salmagundi* no. 10-11, p. 52.
59. Cf. n. 25.
60. Compare Marx's marginal note to *The German Ideology*: "There is no history of politics, law, science, etc., of art, religion, etc." (Moscow, 1964, p. 657). Cf. also the Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 309.
61. *The Demands of Art* (Princeton, N.J., 1968), p. xxi.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hope" aims to reverse the diminishing belief in art, progress and paradise. The 20th century flight of art to "the margins of society" (Edgar Wind), the post-industrial negative forms of art, tend to abandon the archetypes of the past. El Dorado, Eden, The Land of Cockaigne, the Big Rock Candy Mountain, Pastures of Plenty, Oleana, the Island of Apples, the Happy Hunting Grounds, Poor Man's Heaven – all are submerged in the narcissistic anguish of the present moment. Closed off from memory of Eden we cannot enter the gates of Paradise. Art's crystallization of dream is subject to the intrusion of the heavy nightmare of class repression and indivual trauma. All of art's intermediate stages are incomplete (Paradise is not yet); together they form the totality of a Utopia from which we may launch the next dream (Marx: "Storming heaven") into that space which must and will be filled.

We are fast approaching a point beyond which Marxism cannot travel without transmuting itself into theology, and we had better be aware of this possibility before we cross the line. (Otherwise we will not know the road back.) For the dialectical co-ordinate of hope is despair, and the ontology of Not-yet by itself may involve a futuristic and messianic quiescence which can only be shattered by the collective outcry of "Now!"

The philosophy of hope masks the agony and *malaise* from which it rises. One wonders whether Bloch has not suppressed the tragic components of the dialectic from view (Marcuse is more self-revelatory than Bloch in this respect). Despair – Hitler, Auschwitz, the Yezhov purges, Hiroshima, Vietnam, Indonesia, Attica – are the root; hope is the branch and the quest. Yourii's outcry in *Sanin* haunts Bloch: "Why should I sacrifice my own life or submit to insult and death in order that the working classes in the thirty-second century may not suffer through want of food or of sexual satisfaction?" Bloch's answer: "[W]hile these present ends are enclosed within the possible range of a human life, they must *at the same time* set their sights on the distant goal of a society without alienation. The perspective . . . must not leap over the route to the ideal, but follow its stages without abandoning the ideal."[62] We are not condemned to universal "Sisyphusdom": "hope is moving; with close-range objectives in mind when the long-range end is considered, and . . . with long-range end in mind when the close-range objectives are in view. It is precisely hope (to the extent that it is joined to a world that does not surrender) that neither falls into despair nor sinks into quietist confidence."[63]

Plekhanov too had said Not-yet, where Lenin had insisted that ripeness was not all. We are in constant motion toward the unreachable goal – a void which we would fill with passion and with the accumulated desires of an unfulfilled present, modelled on the fantastic memories of every man's Golden Age. But – and Bloch, who is a Communist to the bone, knows it well – Not-yet is also here-and-now: it intrudes into the present as revolutionary consciousness, as the conditional victory of a single revolutionary moment. Eternal postponement

62. *Man on His Own*, p. 86.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is theological submission, though sensibility must be tempered by renunciation if revolution itself would not be postponed. The cry of "*l'imagination au pouvoir*" requires the echoing call "Power to the People!" if mankind is to break with theological delay. Bloch writes: "The morrow lives in today, and is constantly inquired after . . . happiness, freedom, non-alienation, the golden age, the land flowing with milk and honey, the eternal feminine, the trumpet call in *Fidelio*, and the Christ pattern of the resurrection day afterwards – these are so many and diverse witnesses and pictures, yet all have but one focus . . ."[64] Art and the idea of revolution are fragments of that focus.

64. *On Karl Marx* p. 43.

RADICAL AMERICA

Recent issues of **RADICAL AMERICA** have featured:

Women and the Subversion of the Community, by Mariarossa Dalla Costa. An essay on the economic value of women's work, by a member of the Italian women's movement, with an introduction by Selma James of the British movement. Also in this issue: "The Economic Crisis", with contributions by Paul Mattick and by Frank Ackermann and Arthur MacEwen. Vol. VI, no. 1 (January-February, 1972), 120 pp., $1.00.

Industrial Struggles, featuring a self-critical analysis of shop-oriented organizing in the U.S. today by one group, the Sojourner Truth Organization. Also an analysis of the radicalization of Quebec Trade Unions and a major historical essay on Southern textile mills and the workers. Vol. VI, no. 2 (March-April, 1972), 120 pp., $1.00.

Class Forces in the Seventies, with "Theses on the Mass Worker and Social Capital", an interpretation from the Italian extra-parliamentary Left on the transformed character of the class struggle, with an accompanying document by Mario Tronti; and a contribution by Stan Weir to the discussion on the internal decay of unions, the appearance of new class forces, and the difficulties of socialist intervention. Vol. VI, no. 3 (May-June, 1972), 96 pp. $1.00

Subscription to **Radical America**: $5.00 a year. Subscription with 15-20 pamphlets per year, $10.00. Send for free literature catalog. Address correspondence to:

RADICAL AMERICA
5 Upland Road
Cambridge, Mass. 02140.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HISTORY AND EXISTENCE IN HUSSERL'S MANUSCRIPTS*

by

Giovanni Piana

I.

> "There can be no stronger realism than this, if by this word nothing more is meant than: 'I am certain of being a human being who lives in this world, etc., and I doubt it not in the least.' But the great problem is precisely to understand what is here so 'obvious'." – Husserl, *Crisis*[1]

The theme of this work is Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity, and it must be introduced by elaborating the phenomenological program to the *critique of reason*. In dealing with certain issues approached from many directions of contemporary thought, we must not lose sight of its primary motivation, i.e., the problem of a valid foundation for philosophical knowledge. We will try to investigate the theoretical genesis of the theme along the lines that lead from the crisis of thought in the naturalistic attitude, exemplified by scepticism and solipsism, to critical reflection. Such a posing of the problem will allow us to show from the very beginning that the overcoming of scepticism is a function of the solution of the solipsistic objection.[2]

"With the awakening of reflection about the relation of cognition to its object, abysmal difficulties arise. Cognition, the thing most taken for granted in natural thinking, suddenly emerges as a mystery."[3] The presence of the being which I investigate is indubitable: the object is there if I see it, if I succeed in

---

*Originally published as *Storia ed Esistenza nei Manoscritti di Husserl*, Lampugnani-Nigri Editore (Milan, 1965). This work is the result of a study conducted in the Husserl Archives in Freiburg: date of writing and length of the manuscripts cited will be given in footnotes. English translation by Anthony Roda.

1. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, Ill., 1970), p. 187.

2. On the problem of the "critique of reason and phenomenology", see Edmund Husserl, *Die Idee der Phaenomenologie, Fuenf Vorlesungen (1907)*, hrsg. von W. Biemel (The Hague, 1950) – hereafter referred to as *Idee* – translated into English as *The Idea of Phenomenology* by William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague, 1964) – hereafter referred to as *Idea* – and the lecture "Kant und die Idee der Tranzendentalphilosophie" (1924), in Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie*, vol. I, "Kritische Ideengeschichte", hrsg. von R. Boehm (The Hague, 1959), pp. 230-287, hereafter referred to as *Erste Philosophie I*.

3. *Idee*, p. 19; *Idea*, pp. 14-15.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perceiving it, and in grasping it by the use of various simple or complex instruments of investigation. If I make a mistake and if in repeating the experiences, what is given as experienced turns out to be illusory, I shall be able to improve the instruments of verification, by developing other approaches, etc. On this level, in which the object is naturally and directly given to knowledge, the problem of the *possibility* of knowing does not arise.[4] I know and that is enough. To pose the question: "How *can* I know what I see in front of me" seems to run against "common sense". The sceptics' argument leads to this "absurd" problem. It appeals to the hypothesis of an unsuspectable deceit and goes on to maintain the truth of the hypothesis, forcing natural knowledge into a continuous self-verification. The seriousness of this game appears in the implicit request to discuss the indisputability of the fact that, in general, "I know": what is asked for is a guarantee in principle which justifies the validity of my actual as well as of every possible knowledge. The sceptic who seeks to develop his scepticism into a systematic theoretical elaboration runs necessarily into constant contradictions. But the positive need that he consciously or unconsciously brings out is that of a critical foundation of knowledge as such.

Reading Hume stimulates Kant to realize the imposing project of a critique of reason: for Husserl this has an exemplary meaning. Hume proceeds so carefully and penetratingly in his investigation that he brings to light the paradox of knowledge based on the naturalistic attitude, the enigma of the encounter between the immanent operation of cognition and the transcendence of the object: "All cognition of the natural sort, especially the prescientific, is cognition which makes its object transcendent. It posits objects as existent, claims to reach matters of fact which are not 'strictly given to it,' are not 'immanent' to it."[5] Hume shows that transcendence can be reduced to the level of a *fiction*, and knowledge, although remaining what it is, can no longer justify itself through its object.

Even if we avoid the absurd construction of elevating scepticism to a negative system of truth, we must accept the sceptical criticism of the natural attitude. We simply cannot assume as valid the knowledge of the sciences given through the natural attitude.[6] This oversight on the part of "science" is based on the more general questioning of the indubitability of the very being of the "world". For scepticism that would mean: this world, which seems so concrete and so real, may be a dream. Engaged in the polemic with natural dogmatism, scepticism is only an indication of its crisis and remains open to a new and yet more paradoxical theoretical dogmatism. It is blind to the fact that its great discovery lies precisely in the *reduction of the transcendent to immanent givenness*. This discovery can remove it from the natural attitude and introduce it on the path of a fully founded knowledge. Husserl points to the *reduction* as the operation that makes possible the intuitive description of what is seen as such—as given purely to "consciousness" and therefore "true" in the only sense that meets the sceptical challenge. For him, the *fiction* becomes the pure

4. *Idee*, pp. 17-19; *Idea*, pp. 13-15.
5. *Idee*, p. 34; *Idea*, p. 27.
6. *Idee*, p. 36; *Idea*, pp. 28-29.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

visibility of the given: the phenomenon. If I suspend the thesis of existence and consider reality as phenomenon, the transcendent itself is eliminated: what matters now is the modality of the connection between "consciousness" and its object. Dealing with this connection does not imply, rather, it excludes, the transcendent assumption of the object towards which "consciousness" transcends itself: "relating-itself-to-transcendent-things, whether it is meant in this or that way, is still an inner feature of the phenomenon."[7] By radically accepting the sceptical proposal we come to the intentional consideration of being. If the *intentionality* of the relation remains concealed, the sceptic will maintain that he has demonstrated the theoretical confusion between reality and fiction. Although he has undertaken a critique of the natural concept of transcendence, in fact he presupposes it even if only as an epistemologically negative limit.

Through the reduction to the level of phenomenon, the distinction between immanent and transcendent does not disappear but is rigorously upheld in a complete reformulation: rather, what is eliminated is the naive assumption of the in-itself. The concept of being in itself is a pre-philosophical concept developed within the naturalistic reflection. Phenomenology rejects "naïve realism" which is forced to seek a guarantee of its own scientificity in the sciences based on the natural attitude. Yet, "authentic transcendental philosophy, which emphasizes decision from the beginning, is neither openly nor covertly like Humean philosophy, a decomposition of consciousness of the world nor of the world itself in fiction, hence, as one says today, a 'philosophy of the *as if*'. Nor is it a 'dissolution' of the world into 'mere subjective apparitions' which can have reference to appearance in any sense."[8]

"Let us recall Descartes' argument from doubt. Reflecting upon the multiple possibilities of error and of illusion it is possible that I fall into sceptical despair, which ends with the statement: nothing is certain for me, everything is open to doubt. But soon it is evident that for me everything cannot be open to doubt, from the moment that I make this judgment – that for me everything is open to doubt – it is certain that I make this judgment and it would be a contradiction to pretend to maintain a universal doubt. And in every case of determined doubt, it is undoubtedly certain that I doubt in this determined manner. The same is so for every cogitatio."[9] For Husserl this traditional philosophical argument is significant not merely because it expresses the indubitability of the principle of "self-consciousness", but rather because of the truth of the seeing and of the seen considered as intentionally connected. This is why the Cartesian title of *ego cogito* does not designate the premise of a deductive discourse, but, rather, indicates the methodological a priori of description. "It is naturally a ludicrous, though unfortunately common, misunderstanding, to seek to attack transcendental phenomenology as 'Cartesianism'."[10] Certainly, it becomes essential

7. *Idee*, p. 46; *Idea*, p. 36.
8. *Erste Philosophie I*, p. 246.
9. *Idee*, p. 30; *Idea*, p. 23. For the meaning of the *cogito*, see Enzo Paci, *Tempo e Verita nella Fenomenologia di Husserl* (Bari, 1961), pp. 65 ff.
10. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, op.cit.*, p. 189.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for phenomenology to deepen the meaning of the subjective pole of the relation. I must proceed to determine the meaning contents of the *ego* in order to clarify what must be understood as phenomenological description. In fact, it seems that by means of the phenomenological reduction one can attain, emerging from the natural attitude and from scepticism, knowledge based on an autonomous and valid foundation. This is now for us only the "who" of the intentional relation: neither a "thinking thing" nor a "human-I". However, before clarifying this, we are faced with a principled objection: if the object of phenomenological knowledge is essentially referred to a subjective pole, either this knowledge reduces to mere privateness thus renouncing any objective validity or, if it pretends to be objective, it must produce transcendences, thus reintroducing doubt, against its own assumption.[11] The problem of the "objectivity" of knowledge is not only analogous but it is a consequence of that of transcendence. For thought based on the naturalistic attitude, actual or possible knowledge of the in-itself is truth in-itself. We find ourselves again in trouble only if the critiques of the natural concept of the knowledge of transcendence does not follow the critiques of the natural concept of transcendence. But it makes no sense to compare the naive objectivity of knowledge and the subjectivity of phenomenological discourse. In the intentional perspective "subjective" and "private" do not coincide and objectivity as validity for "others" remains to be explained. Here it is possible to raise a second and more serious objection on principle: what can the expression "the others" mean for us if, after the reduction, we only know of a pure non-human disembodied, unique, and absolute subjectivity? Are we not perhaps trapped in *solipsism* the moment we attempt a description of the field outlined by the *ego cogito* considered as the "who" of the intentional relation?

The phenomenological exercise of the *epochē* has led me to the suspension of all that belongs to the already given: i.e., of all that I know as already valid about others, and from others, of the human world as the world which, in the evolution of its history, I know to be one and the same for all. With its claim of absoluteness, isn't phenomenological knowledge nothing other than an empty solipsistic discourse? This objection, which is reiterated as if it were able to theoretically refute phenomenology, must be clarified and comprehended in its internal meaning.

The proposition "the world is" (*Die Welt ist*) – which immediately implies the assertion of my existence and that of others in the world – may be considered as the fundamental thesis of the realistic pre-conception which daily experience and *praxis* have always presupposed. Dealing now with this formulation, we obtain a new positing of the critique of the natural attitude, which identifies solipsism as an aspect of scepticism and at the same time the meaningful margin that it entails for philosophical reflection. Does the indubitability of the thesis concerning the existence of the world, obvious for the natural attitude, express an apodictic certainty? Something is beyond doubt if "nothing speaks against it": but cognition is truly apodictic only if in principle

11. *Idee*, p. 49; *Idea*, pp. 38-39.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it excludes the possibility of not being about the known.[12] The thesis concerning the existence of the world does not have this character of apodicticity: the contingency of the proposition "the world is" can be refuted because every fact (*Faktum*) is contingent and the world is a fact.[13] The certainty of the existence of the world which we assume and in which "we believe" is solely empirical: "Nothing speaks in favor of the non-existence of the world, everything speaks in favor of its existence."[14] Yet the opposite thesis concerning the non-existence of the world is not self-contradictory: I could think that the harmonic style of experience which gives me the world as existent is altogether wrong. The insane can say: "the world does not exist." The objection to realism is "the objection of insanity."[15] We can stop with this outcome, thus getting rid of this inconvenient inconsistency with "common sense" without difficulty: we thus appeal to normality and to the validity for all by rejecting the insane in his own solitude. But here is where the problem lies: only if we hold firm to the natural ground of communicative attitude, we remain and judge within the norm. My style of experience whereby there is a world for me coincides with the style of the experience of others and its eventual partial modification can be without difficulty interpreted in reference to communal normality. But in the hypothesis of a total modification, which takes away all horizons of belief, I have no norm at my disposal: for me the world and others are mere fictions.

It is necessary to place oneself in absolute solitude: only I am apodictically indubitable. The experiences of others must be evaluated no differently than my own experiences: they are *experiences of my experiences* and nothing more. I must remove myself from the communicative attitude insofar as it presupposes the existence of others, real or possible, and therefore pass from a discourse implicating the *us* (*Wir-Rede*) to a purely egological (*Ich-Rede*) discourse.[16] Even though the solipsist has undertaken an apodictic criticism of the natural experience of the world, he has not grasped the meaning of his reduction: his reflection remains naive just like the result which he believes he reaches.[17] On the other hand, we point out the groundlessness of naive realism and by reducing to appearance the world, and the others in it, we interpret the appearance itself in a transcendental way as pure phenomenological givenness. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis of the illusoriness of the world but we recognize its nature as "mere hypothesis." Husserl reproaches Descartes for not having realized that the doubt arising from the possible illusoriness of experienced data cannot be extended to "really" shake the certainty of the world.[18] Thus, we necessarily

12. Edmund Husserl, *Erste Philosophie*, vol. II, "Theorie der phaenomenologischen Reduktion", hrsg. von R. Boehm (The Hague, 1959), p. 54; hereafter referred to as *Erste Philosophie II*.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 50 and 53.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
18. "Isn't the peculiarity of the certainty of the world precisely in this: that, in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

find ourselves in solipsism, but we consciously take it to be a device, a mental experiment (*Gedankenexperiment*),[19] a fiction.[20] Certainly, methodical solipsism soon poses more than one problem, but it cannot be resolved by appealing to the obvious and ordinary daily being and the certainty that it entails. Rather, what is needed is the constitutive foundation of otherness, on the basis of a phenomenological apodicticity which is disclosed by the very sceptic-solipsistic requirement. Precisely because the phenomenological method places importance of the solipsistic doubt it posits the theme of intersubjectivity as its necessary task.[21]

II.

In following the main lines of Husserl's theory of Einfuehlung – the group of analyses meant to describe the experience of subjective otherness – we must emphasize the fact that in doing so, we are constantly moving on a transcendental ground: the other is given as a phenomenon among other phenomena of the descriptive sphere outlined by the reduction to the *ego cogito*. We are not in the mere "empirical existence" where the other is already there

---

its way, it remains even in its apodicticity, notwithstanding all the real and possible doubts with respect to a given situation? And that it cannot be arbitrarily destroyed, although the single realities, always in the single real situation, could be doubted and even too often they undergo a transformation of validity by passing from being to appearance?

"Descartes has not considered this fact and, naturally, he has not seen the problems that referred to it and which had to arise from the adoption of his (correctly understood) discovery. Thus, it is impossible to talk about a really universal doubt concerning the world; but what remains of his method, his essential merit, is an *epoche* of the being of the entire world (for Descartes motivated by the universal possibility of doubt as the possibility of the world's non-being)." Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europaeischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phaenomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phaenomenologische Philosophie*, hrsg. von Walter Biemel (The Hague, 1954). Unfortunately, the English translation has omitted this important section.

19. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer Phaenomenologie und phaenomenologischen Philosophie*, hrsg. von W. Biemel (The Hague, 1952), p. 81.

20. *Erste Philosophie II*, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

21. Concerning the history of the problem within the development of Husserl's thought, we must limit ourselves to the following few hints: in the semester of Winter 1910-1911, Husserl held a seminar in Gottingen on "The Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology", in which, for the first time, he dealt with the problem of transcendental intersubjectivity. (Cf. *Erste Philosophie II*, p. 433, n. 3.) In the 1907 lectures (*Idee*, *Idea*, *op.cit.*) the reduction is not yet extended to intersubjectivity, and the problem of subjective otherness is not even posed. Commenting upon this later, Husserl observes that they contained an "error in principle". (Cf. *Erste Philosophie II*, p. 433.) In the period from 1910 to 1929 (*Cartesian Meditations*) the problem of intersubjectivity is gradually elaborated, yet, it is already worked out in its essential outline around the period 1923-1924 (in *Erste Philosophie*).

22. Apparently the term *Einfuehlung* was introduced into the German

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and, therefore, there is no need to constitute him.[23] If we posit the problem of his constitution, this is because the "empirical" assumption is not yet meaningful by itself. Our problem is of understanding in its own meaning, free from every metaphysical hypothesis and from all obviousness, the presence to me of the other as a being subjectively foreign: "We must, after all, obtain for ourselves insight into the explicit and implicit intentionality wherein the alter ego becomes evinced and verified in the realm of our transcendental ego; we must discover in what intentionalities, syntheses, motivations, the sense "other ego" becomes fashioned in me and, under the title, harmonious experience of someone else, becomes verified as existing and even as itself there in its own manner."[24]

The transcendental constitution of the other as such is basic for every formation of being-there-for-everyone, therefore of "objectivity" in the broad sense, of the world as nature and culture. Through it, one must come to "a universal history in the sense that emanating from within, it renders possible for me in particular the objective world."[25]

The "bracketing" required for an adequate thematization of subjective otherness applies to all subjects which present themselves as strangers and the formations which imply otherness, directly or indirectly. This special reductive operation aims at defining what belongs *first and foremost* to the *I* in order to eventually come to a positive explication of the experience of the other in its originality. Initial solipsism is brought to the extreme limit because the bracketing is now turned to extraneous intentional meanings in their own reduced phenomenal form.

The reduction of the objective sciences and of the world leads to the *ego cogito* as the transcendental field of phenomena: the world is still given to the ego as a phenomenon and in it are found the others and the intersubjective meaning formations, but only under the prefix "as if".[26] The universal sphere of

---

philosophical dictionary by Herder, and Husserl probably got it from Theodor Lipps' *Aesthetik*. At any rate, it was a common word in contemporary philosophical culture – thus provided with quite a broad meaning which must be periodically specified further. Husserl takes it in this general breadth to indicate the whole of intentional acts aimed at otherness. The proposed translations so far are many and almost always questionable especially when it is attempted to give it a unique pregnant meaning that it does not have. This does not mean, as it is claimed following Scheler, that Husserl has divested the term of every emotional content. It only means that feeling for Husserl is only one mode of the *Einfuehlung*.

23. Cf. Manuscript C-11-V, p. 7. This manuscript is 19 pages long, and was originally written by Husserl in December 1931.

24. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by Dorion Cairns (The Hague, 1967), p. 90.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93. [The English translation has not been used here, owing to equivocation as to what the original German should read. At a crucial point, Cairns prefers to read *"Sinnesschichte"* (layers of meaning), while Piana reads *"Sinngeschichte"* (history of sense). This, of course, renders the English translation virtually useless for reference here. – Ed.]

26. *Ibid.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being has become a correlative phenomenon to the pure transcendental ego. When I carry out a further *epochē* on the meaning "other", the ego is returned to its "propriety", i.e., to the *transcendental and concrete I itself*.[27] Deprived of every subjective intention besides mine, i.e., of all that which can be subsumed under "culture", the "world" is *only* my world but, for the same reason, it is also *only* "nature". *Nature itself (eigenheitliche Natur)* is not "Mere nature" as the object of "science" which still holds, even though it is obtained by abstracting from every human-cultural meaning, the character of being-there-for-everyone, of objectivity. Rather, it is essentially perception, i.e., the intentional connection between living perceiving corporeality and perceived objectivity.

The reduction of transcendental subjectivity to "my" being of the subject, reveals its original natural character: its essential being in and for a body. Living and perceiving corporeality is original because of the fact that it is the ultimate domain which I reach through the reductive process brought to the limit: it is the foundation of every possible experience of the world.[28] It is, so to say, the sphere of absolute "solipsism", or, in Husserlian terminology, the sphere of *primordinality* or egological primordiality:[29] that which is absolutely first in my being as an I, and thus not yet an "I-man", but "pure and simple sensibility".[30] What makes the I an I is not an empty essence, but *first and foremost* the perceiving operating of the body.

The reduction to the primordial leads to an internal outlining of the subjective pole of the intentional relation, thus immediately proposing a thematic negatively contraposed to the *other*. Furthermore, it makes possible the theme of the spatio-temporal constitution of "nature" by demanding for it a purely perceptual foundation.[31] It is also clear that, because of the domain of perception through which it has been obtained, it must not be understood as a field of absolute immediacy. The constitution of the other, precisely because it shatters the solipsism of perception on the perceptual level, must necessarily introduce new and complex considerations which emphasize the moment of mediation, both in relation to "nature" and to the human world, i.e., "culture".

Something like *another living body*, a body itself perceived as a subject of perception, is given in the field of perception. It does not resolve itself in mere being present: if such were the case, it would not really be *another* for me, nor would it be a *living body*. Original and direct experience is limited to self-perception of "my" body and to the perception of the mere materiality of

27. We translate *"Eigenheit"* simply as "propriety". Often it is translated as "belonging". For the expression "transcendental and concrete I-itself", cf. *ibid.*, p. 93.
28. *Cartesian Meditations, op.cit.*, pp. 95-96.
29. The term "primordinal" is typical of the fifth Cartesian Meditation. In the manuscripts Husserl uses more often "primordial"; occasionally he also uses "primordium". Cf. Manuscript C-16-VII, p. 14. (This Manuscript is 18 pages long and was written in May 1933.) This primordial world is also called *"Die 'erste' Welt"*, in Manuscript D-12-IV (34 pages long and written in 1931).
30. *Cartesian Meditations, op.cit.*, p. 145.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perceived bodies: what makes the body perceptively given as "animated" and as "other" is not itself present (*selbst-da*), but co-present (*mit-da*). We designate the intentional perceptive act which brings to givenness the other as such by the term *appresentation*.[32] "In the perception given in effective originality, I have only the corporeality of the other. If I say: 'this man is present in flesh and blood' precisely what renders him a person, what 'animates' this material body by conferring upon it the meaning of living body, is not originally perceived. It is co-present, presentified and rendered intuitive, but it is not 'present' in actual originality (as is my own egological being): it is originally given only as 'co-present' (not in a mere indirect presumption, as by hearsay, etc.)."[33] The fact that the experience of the other is not presenting but appresenting indicates only that the other is primordially present in a radical transcendence:[34] nonetheless, the *other itself* is in my perceptive horizon. In a manuscript presumably written during the same period as the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl speaks of the "originality of appresentation." "My 'perception' of others is the original self-giving of other men: the originality where their psychic being, together with their body immediately given to me, is the originality of appresentation, which consequently becomes legitimized in the synthesis of a progressive and increasingly more complete, i.e., self-confirming experience."[35] Let us now attempt a more precise determination of the difference between perception of a thing and perception of otherness (*estraneità*), and therefore of their different modalities of verification (*Bewahrung*). The concept of appresentation pertains even in the interpretation of the perception of a thing. The immediately perceived, i.e., what is directly presence, implies a horizon of appresence.[36] The appresenting act here presupposes an intention which can be "filled" through a proper change of location of the perceiving subject. What is appresented becomes directly present if I change position and look at the object "from the back." But the *other* is not behind his body, so as to present itself entirely if I go around him.[37] For me, the verification of the other's being is not a

32. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

33. Manuscript A-V-5, pp. 223-224. This manuscript is 259 pages long and was written at different times from 1920 to 1933.

34. "Personal otherness represents a much more advanced transcendence than that of inanimate things." Cf. E. Melandri, *Logica e Esperienza in Husserl* (Bologna, 1961), p. 207. In the theory of the *Fremderfahrung* it is not at all a matter of "minimizing" the distance between ego and alter-ego as Rene Toulemont has observed, in passing, in his *L'essence de la société selon Husserl* (Paris, 1962), p. 55, but only of understanding the meaning of this distance.

35. Cf. Manuscript A-V-10/2, pp. 155 and 208 where Husserl uses the expression "secondary originality" of the *Einfuehlung* in contraposition to primordial *Selbsterfahrung*. This manuscript is 134 pages long, and was written between 1920 and 1930.

36. For the notions of *Urpraesenz* and *Appraesenz*, see Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phaenomenologie und phaenomenologische Philosophie* Band II, "Phaenomenologischen Untersuchungen zur Konstitution", hrsg. von W. Biemel (The Hague, 1952), pp. 162 ff.

37. Cf. Manuscript A-V-5, p. 166.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

function of the synthetic identification of the experienced unity through the reiteration of adumbrating experiences, as is the case with the perception of a thing: "In a certain sense, the apprehension of the man goes through the phenomenon of the body, which is here *living body*. It does not stop, so to say, near the body; its arrow does not aim towards it nor towards a spirit connected to it, but 'goes behind' and is directed precisely at the man."[38]

The apprehension of the man does not proceed from the body to the soul in a succession as if the mere body were given at *first* and *then* the entire person. For this same reason the entire body of the other does not necessarily present itself to me so that I can have this apprehension: a part presupposes the whole.[39] The perceptive appresentation or *apperception* necessarily intervenes both in the case of the perception of the thing, as well as in the case of the perception of the other. Yet, the terms and meanings which enter into the apperceptive relation are different.

Apperception in general means "an apprehension of the being in a mode consonant to that which is already similar for me."[40] The body of the other primordially experienced is not given as a mere material body, but as subjective organ "analogous" to the body in which "my" egological living obtains. Since this experience falls within the sphere of propriety, I must conclude that the meaning of living corporeality which I experience as *other* is constituted by departing from the living body which I originally experience as specifically *my-own*: the living corporeality of the other is given in an *analogical apperception*.[41] And it must be added that only in this apperception do I recognize, with the body of the other, my body as my own: the experience of the other implies a reciprocal perceptive recognition, i.e., an associative

38. *Ideen*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 240.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
40. Cf. Manuscript D-12-IV, p. 25.
41. For *analogische Apperzeption* and *veraehnlichende Apperzeption*, see *Cartesian Meditations, op.cit.*, p. 108. The equivocations regarding the nature of this "analogizing" act are well known. Among the first, it was Max Scheler to interpret the Husserlian analogy as mere intellectual comparison. Against Scheler, Husserl clearly asserts that analogical apperception is not reasoning by analogy, nor a syllogism, nor a mental act. A similar miscomprehension can be found in Alfred Schutz when he writes that: "Husserl's assumption that an analogical apprehension of an Other's living body takes place on the basis of a similarity to my own living body contradicts the phenomenological finding that my living body 'stands out' in my primordial perceptual field in a manner which is fundamentally different from the manner in which the allegedly similar body of the Other stands out in this field." Cf. *Collected Papers*, vol. III, "Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy", ed. by I. Schutz (The Hague, 1966), pp. 63-64. In the same essay we also find the objection of the "man that we meet in the subway" which we often like to refer to: "It must also be asked whether in fact the bodily appearance of the Other in my primordial sphere has the decisive significance which Husserl ascribes to it. I empathize much more with a philosopher spatially and temporally distant than with my neighbor in the subway who is given to me in person (*leibhaftig*), but a stranger (*Fremder*)." *Ibid.*, p. 81.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

identification of perceiving subjects. In the perception of a thing, on the other hand, the perceptive-apperceptive process identifies the thing with itself by determining and estranging it in its objective transcendence: "The living body is experienced according to the apperception of my own living body. It seems simply a matter of dealing with the apperception of the similar through what is previously experienced as similar, in a way consonant with it. Yet, that does not occur as in a field already constituted of things outside of me, when I certainly transfer apperceptively what I know about a thing to another similar to it. Initially, my body does not have any similar body. It arrives at that only through a new kind of apperception of the living body, which already presupposes the apperception of the external thing, but modifies it in a new kind of apperception."[42]

In the apprehension of the other, the intentionality of the perceptive act is not directed to catch the mere externality of the body, but its *expressivity*: "Other I's, men and animals, are first of all experienced as bodies in the world, but as 'expressing' and appresenting a conscious life alien to me."[43] The expressiveness of the body is its gestual operating. The certainty of the other's being is based upon the continual and consonant verification of *gestuality* (behavior) of the body of the other.[44] In the process of my experiencing directed to the "thing", I verify it constantly in its previously anticipated givenness, in its being as it is and in the 'circumstances' which condition and characterize it: "But to the extent that a person has a general style that offers a trace to the association and to the extent that it lives in circumstances and in reference to them, it upholds its own identity, not through mere circumstances, but through its own behavior (*Verhalten*) in them: it outlines what it will do and how it will behave in so doing. A person cannot be constructed. Its individuality can only be recognized from the actual unfolding of its behavior – even if within an essential form which cannot be gone beyond."[45]

---

42. Cf. Manuscript D-12-IV, pp. 26-27.

43. Cf. Manuscript A-VI-23, p. 11; this manuscript was written February 13, 1932, and it is 14 pages long. For corporeality as *Ausdruck*, cf. *Ideen*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, pp. 234 ff. Husserl occasionally uses also the term *Indikation* (cf. *Erste Philosophie I, op.cit.*, p. 187); *altruistische Indikation* (cf. Manuscript A-V-5, p. 32) and *Indizierung* (cf. Manuscript A-VI-20, pp. 44-45, 65 pages long and written between 1928 and 1929).

44. For gestuality as *Meinenspiel*, cf. *Ideen* vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 253. For behavior as *Gebaren*, cf. *Cartesian Meditations, op.cit.* "*Gebaren* is Husserl's 'behavior' which, in a certain sense, is original and pre-predicative with respect to the behavior of the behaviorists." Enzo Paci, *Tempo e Verita nella Fenomenologia di Husserl, op.cit.*, p. 147.

45. Manuscript A-V-5, p. 34. The knowledge of the other as a person cannot derive from a mere inductive expectation (Manuscript A-V-5, p. 35). Constantly dissatisfied with the terminology connected with the theme of intersubjectivity, Husserl also speaks occasionally of *Induktion* (cf. Manuscript A-VI-20, p. 44; in the margin, however, we find added "Induction is a bad word"), but he underlines that, while the experience of the physical object is inductive, in the case of the other.I can speak of induction only in an improper sense: I can say

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Since the external aspect of the other is understood as behavior, my comprehension is *internal* to the sense that it grasps externality as subjectively motivated. In the term "understanding", the nature of the comprehensive act is not yet established: whether it is essentially theoretical or affective. This problem, around which much has been written, does not exist in any form. Yet, we distinguish between reflective and pre-reflective *Einfuehlung*: the first always "presupposes" the second.[46] Perceptive *Einfuehlung* has a transcendental priority: there are then infinite modified modalities, which remain to be described from time to time. There is always an *interest*[47] guiding my intentional attention, so that the modes of comprehension are to be phenomenologically differentiated in correlation to my always different mode of being interested: "The other is experienced in such a way that I am 'absorbed in him' always because of some interest. In the appresentation through which he is experienced as a bodily person in my perceptual world, rather, in my actual spatial field of the perceptual present, I live his life with him. In general, he is present to me in a way of even being appresented as a person with a personal life. Yet, the appresentation, as when one looks in passing, may remain altogether inactive in a complete lack of transparence and distinction, even if he – lacking interests in me – remains nonetheless in the background. If the appresentation is activated and operates as if in an active interest, then it is a co-feeling *to and in the other person*, almost a living with it. His experiencing, his thinking, evaluating and operating is found in the presentificating appresentation according to the modes in which from time to time it is determined."[48]

The fact that the other is in my perceptual field and I in his, still does not mean that we are reciprocally perceiving each other as perceivers.[49] It can happen that I see the other without knowing whether he has seen me or not. I can observe him without he becoming aware of it and vice versa. The presence of the other can be given to me while I am not directed towards it in an explicit *Einfuehlung*. On the other hand, I am explicitly directed towards the other, I catch his manifestations and I eventually comprehend him as explicitly directed towards my manifestations, or to my being directed towards him: "For example, while he observes me in some interest, he can also think that I remain unaware, perhaps because I act as if I were not aware and avoid any expression that would

---

that in the *Einfuehlung* I "carry out an induction" concerning the other subject – but this only because in my self-experience which does not derive from induction, I already have a "prototype of subjectivity" (cf. Manuscript A-V-10/2, p. 175). Concerning the relative function of the "inductive method" in the *Fremderfahrung*, see Toulemont, *op.cit.*, pp. 70-71.

46. Cf. Manuscript A-V-10, pp. 121 and 122. This manuscript is 130 pages long, and was written between 1920 and 1931.

47. Cf. Manuscript C-16-IV, p. 30. This manuscript was written in March 1932 and is 32 pages long.

48. Cf. Manuscript A-V-6, p. 18. This manuscript is 44 pages long and written in 1932.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

give me away."[50] With all these modalities, we cannot yet properly speak of any "intentional unification: or of any actual I-thou connection (*Ich-Du-Konnex*): "What is still missing is the project and the will of making known – the specific activity of communication . . ."[51]

The behavior of the other is a manifestation (*Bekundung*) even "without the other having a specifically manifest intention, i.e., communicative." A manifestation is comprehensible simply through its being expressed. *Communication (Mitteilung)*, in its original meaning, is something else: here I am intentionally directed towards the other and the other must be thought of as comprehending me in this intention. In communication what is requested is the manifestation of the very communicating intention. Self-expression – which generally inheres in all modes of the *Einfuehlung* – to the extent that it is intentionally communicating manifestation, is speech (*Rede*).[52]

Here we use *speech* in its broadest sense, including communicative modalities of the spoken word, the written word, and the very gesture which explicitly communicates.[53] It has a particular character of immediacy: in talking, I turn directly to the one that listens and consider him solely as a listener. I do not have present the means through which my speech becomes accessible to him. The same is true for me as a speaker: if I speak, I am not aware of my voice, its volume, etc.[54] Speech is purely a turning-discursively-towards-someone (*Anrede*) in order to be included in his intention of speaking-to: its end is to have the other to whom I turn recognize that he is being recognized by me. Discursive recognition further defines the idea of community (*Gemeinschaft*), which has already emerged in the interpretation of the perceptual experience of the other: "Any sociality has as its basis (above all in the originality of the social activity actually produced) the actual connection of the communicating community, of the pure community of the turning-discursively-towards and of its assumption; more clearly: of the saying-to and paying-attention-to. This linguistic relation is the fundamental form of the communicating unification in general, the original form of a particular identification between me and the other. This results in a unification of speech between anyone and someone else who is for him the other."[55] He to whom I speak and who listens to me, who pays attention to my

50. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 32. These problems are already dealt with in *Ideen II, op.cit.*, p. 192 f., where the reciprocal interpersonal influence is discussed. Here Husserl indicates as *Einwirkung* (distinguishing this concept from *Wirkung*) the directing towards the other with the intention of realizing in him a modification. A fundamental form of the *Einwirkung* is discursive communication. This aspect of Manuscript A-V-6 is dealt with in more detail by Toulemont, *op.cit.*, pp. 102-109.
52. Cf. Manuscript A-V-6, p. 33.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 35. For an example of a purely gestual speech, see Manuscript A-V-23, p. 2, cited by Toulemont, *op.cit.*, p. 109.
54. A brief analysis of the immediacy of communication is contained in Manuscript A-II-1, p. 5. This manuscript was written in 1933 and is 28 pages long.
55. Cf. Manuscript A-V-6, p. 36.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speech and responds to it, is no longer merely the *other* but my *you*, and in speech we both refer to ourselves as *us*: "In speaking-to and in the assumption of this speaking, I and the other I come to a first unification. I am not only for myself, and the other is not in front of me as other, but the other is my you, and, in speaking, in listening, in answering, we already form an us, which is in a particular way unified and shared."[56] Here we are only at the beginning of a vast theme which has its center in the original intersubjective sharing. In order to further clarify in its proper meaning, it is necessary to describe extraneous presence in the still unmentioned perspective of the problem of time.[57]

Let us go back to the beginning of our discourse, even before we directly thematized subjective otherness. There we found the problem of the explication of the meaning of the subjective pole of the intentional relation: let us attempt to penetrate the structure of subjectivity considered as such and in general. By "subjectivity" we don't mean any metaphysical "entity" which we eventually come to in virtue of some special faculty of the "spirit". Our problem is simply to ascertain, by remaining firm within phenomenological empiricism, which contents are concealed within my constant knowing myself as an *I* such as I am. At the beginning this property through which I name myself, is systematically put aside and neutralized: proceeding in this fashion I can thematically turn not upon myself, but upon subjectivity as such, while constantly remaining within self-reflection – itself understood as indifferent with respect to its contents. Husserl attempts to work out such an analysis specifically in the manuscripts C, which go under the meaningful title of "Constitution of Time as Formal Constitution" (*Zeitkonstitution als formale Konstitution*). The pure explication of the subjective structure directly concerns the constitution of time as such. Subjectivity and temporality are rooted in a single theme and cannot be considered in an abstract separation. We do not intend to deal with this, and we simply refer to Gerd Brand's exposition of this group of manuscripts dealing specifically with this theme.[58] Rather, we want to

---

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

56. Husserl's earliest investigations explicitly aimed at the phenomenological clarification of "internal time-consciousness" go back to the 1904-1905 period: the relevant manuscripts were edited only in 1928 by Heidegger (cf. *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, trans. by James S. Churchill, Bloomington, Ind., 1964). In the better known published works the theme of time, although always present, is never in the foreground and it is usually dealt with in an obscure way: it seems as if Husserl hesitated to present publically his investigations concerning a theme which he always considered exceptionally difficult (e.g., see how he talks about it in *Ideen I, op.cit.*, p. 197). Enzo Paci, in his original re-elaboration of Husserl's thought, has brought to light the fundamental importance of the inextricable nexus between intentionality and time. Only upon this basis is it possible, on an interpretative level, to obtain a comprehensive and unitary vision of Husserl's thought, as it appears both in published as well as unpublished works, eliminating recurring equivocations transmitted from book to book. Cf. Paci, *op.cit.*, specifically the essay on "Tempo e Intersoggettivita", pp. 129-165.

58. Gerd Brand, *Welt, Ich und Zeit* (The Hague, 1955).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

underline an aspect, already present in Brand, which deals with our specific task. To claim that subjectivity is temporal also means to emphasize the "dialectic" through which it is constituted. Subjective identity is to be understood as a constant recapturing of a distance which is not resolved but shared, hence as a temporal process of *identification (Deckung)*. The ego is temporal in distancing itself from itself and constantly finds itself in a community (*Gemeinschaft*) with itself. Had such not been the case, a past and a future would have no meaning for the I[59] and an I which has neither a past nor future is not even an I. The assertion of the self-reflective ungraspability of the I, which has given rise to many metaphysical extravagances, makes sense only if it is meant to indicate the temporality of subjectivity as such. If I describe the I as it is purely given in self-reflection, I am always referred back to a new operating of the I and this reveals as a subject to me my mode of being in time and of having time: "Therefore I am present to myself in the original form of the 'now' without being objective, not in so far as I know myself and I am knowable, but altogether and immediately. But to the extent that I am completely and immediately present to myself, I can also be present to myself objectively, not as I am in my operating, but as I was 'shortly before'."[60] In reflecting, the object-I is distinct and far from the I which now reflects, but it is the I which I was 'shortly before'. There is always a distance in the I, but this distance "is always already filled, because I am always the same." Reflection is the difference and the coincidence of the I, the filled distance, the original explication of a "now" and of a "shortly before".[61] The I's identity, which is revealed in the possibility of reflection and in the constant identification in the distance of a past and of a future is designated by Husserl as a *living fluent present.*[62]

All of this remains valid if I explicitly consider the presence to me of the other and reflect within my reduced propriety: I am exactly that which I am in the continual recapturing of the distance between the I of my present and the I's of my past and of my possible future. In this present I presentify the I that I have been and that I can be in the future. My own subjective identity is constantly reconstituted in the presentifying operations. The synthesis of identification which leads back to my self is possible to the extent that the numerous acts of numerous I's are coexisting in the form of time. This is not the time "of everyone" (a meaning which remains yet to be constituted) nor subjective time "in general". My own time (*Selbstzeit*) is the time in which I myself am and in which the numerous egological acts are *mine*.[63] Egological immanence has meaning only if it is temporal, and therefore only if it is shared: if it contains a distance which persists in the identification. In this distance, internal to egological life itself and not identifiable with exact coincidence, *otherness* already has a model of itself. The I presupposes the other – and the

59. Cf. Manuscript C-16-III, p. 13. This manuscript is 15 pages long and was written in May 1932.
60. Brand, *op.cit.*, p. 131.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
63. For an elaboration of the notion of *Selbstzeit*, see Manuscript C-16-VI, p. 36. This manuscript is 39 pages long, and was written in May 1932.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

presupposition is not an argumentative reason, but simply its being posed before the I to itself. The presupposed otherness is the other which I have been once, which I can be in the future, or which I project of being within my possibilities or in the impossibility of my fantasy: "What I intuitively experience as subjectively alien is, according to its entire intuitive content – according to the entire intuitive structure of meaning, by abstracting from the mode of being of what is subjectively alien – necessarily inherent in the domain of my possible pure self-experience, to the extent that it is already outlined from the domain of its own possible fantasy."[64] At any rate, the other is not a link in a deductive chain: he is always and only given in a specific form of *experience* which we have agreed to indicate by the term *Einfuehlung*. In fact, within my primordial field there appears primordiality which is not mine and which cannot be brought to an immediate synthetic unity with it. The other is experienced as *itself* primordial and constituting on the basis of the original centrality of his present – his own time: "Every I which I experience as other in original presentification has *its* unity, its flowing life, its immanent temporal flux of concrete temporalization and its primordial nature."[65] There is no other unity between me and the other, through which the *alter ego* can be recognized by me as the other I which I have once been. The other is there in his own transcendence: "No continuity leads from my egological pole, i.e., from my continuous substratum of inactive intentionality and from my acts (whose external continuity, in the temporal flux, has as a correlate the opposite continuity of the I-pole which is in a shared identity with itself) towards the other egological pole."[66]

In my temporal immanence, *I render present* another temporal immanence. In my present, I presentify another present: *Einfuehlung* itself is nothing but an altogether particular mode of *presentification*.[67] It is necessary to pause on this point. In the *Einfuehlung* my acts intentionally and appresentatively imply extraneous acts and the other's presentations in appresentative mediation,[68] along with his appresentation and his presentification through which he temporally constitutes himself in his egological immanence and recognizes in me another egological immanence. My rendering present is therefore directed towards another rendering present: towards what is already presentifying by itself. In *Einfuehlung* I come to the I, but not to the same I which I am. Here the I is actually *another*, in front of my I "in an externally present temporal field".[69] "If we remain in the original perception of the other man in which his I is presentified and appresented, even if in a limiting modality, and if we continually remain in the co-validity through which the very 'we' of the other is

64. Manuscript A-VI-20, p. 45. Cf. Manuscript C-17-I, pp. 6-7.
65. Manuscript C-16-VII, p. 4.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
67. In the fifth of the *Cartesian Meditations*, the temporal theme is not pursued. For an emphasis on the *Einfuehlung* as a form of presentification, see *Cartesian Meditations, op.cit.*, pp. 144-145. For an emphasis on the intersubjective constitution of time, see *ibid.*, p. 156.
68. Cf. Manuscript C-16-VII, p. 13.
69. Manuscript C-16-VI, p. 30.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

given in continuity not only the 'we' of the material body but of the man, then I myself am near him but only I myself as he who fulfills the apperception of man, and the interfelt components included in it: 'near him' means nothing more than being near him in the presentification for the *Einfuehlung*."[70]

In the encounter, two spheres of immanence reciprocally face each other. The primordial I centered in its immanent temporality, and the other I, constituted appresentatively for himself: a primordial I constituting himself in his own time. The most radical and profound distance between the I and the other seems to consist of this being centered in a temporal and reciprocally extraneous property. Yet, in general, the presentifying operation does not just fix a mere distance but necessarily carries out an identifying function: *the presentification always carries out a transcending of the transcendence.* That is clear if we limit ourselves to considering the recollection in which a past is distanced as past and recognized as present. But the *Einfuehlung* – although there is some kind of an analogy – is not a recollection:[71] then what is the character of its peculiar being a presentification in relation to its own reciprocal transcendence of time, and how can an identification take place? The answer to such a question must lead to the constitution of temporal objectivity in which we all already know ourselves to be.

The primordially reduced living present is the now (*Jetzt*) in which I know myself as a corporeal subject: it is my now as the further and essential determination of my here. I am an I *here* and *now*, and I am properly an I only in this form of spatio-temporal individuation. The phenomenological path which leads to the themes of egological concreteness necessarily goes through the clarification of the experience of subjective otherness in its proper modality and in the sense of its constitutive operating. If we limit ourselves to time, we are led to specify fluid living present in the living temporality of my *now* in front of the living now of the other. By estranging the other's now, the present individuates itself as mine in the encounter. The community which leads reciprocal estrangement to identification is revealed in this individuating correlativity. I constitute the other in his now during my now, but the *same now* joins us both. We are not in the sameness of a time which transcends and contains us: the foundation of the temporal community is my very present within which *another* same present is revealed and discovered as the same: the community is the synthetic formation of temporal distance. By becoming specific and individuated as *mine*, this now is distinguished and shared. This is where the togetherness of mine and of the other's now comes into being as *temporal contemporaneity (zeitliches Zugleich).*[72] Recollection also includes a simultaneity of the presentified present which has past and which is *now* remembered as a past *now*, but this being together of two nows is not a temporal contemporaneity: it is not a new now, i.e., a new temporal determination. Contemporaneity properly understood is the simultaneity of two (or more) nows in the synthesis of a new now: "While I fulfill my *Einfuehlung* in my living present, I have my present and

70. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 35. Also cf. Manuscript C-16-VII, p. 15.
72. Cf. Manuscript C-17-I, p. 14. This manuscript is 44 pages long, and was written in September 1931.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that of the other in their extending themselves in a punctual contemporaneity. The difference, however, is that the present of the other is not given to me as perceptively intuitive, but is intra-felt. What is given in the *Einfuehlung* (the presentified) is what is continuously experienced and continuously unified with the experienced. But one could say: this is also what happens with intuitive recollection. In relation to reciprocal duration, the present recollecting is specifically identified with what is recalled. But this contemporaneity of identification is not temporal contemporaneity: the first is my present while the second is my past."[73]

The synthesis of recollection is *egological* through time: it is not a synthesis *of* time. On the other hand, the presentification through the *Einfuehlung* is an identification *of* time which implies the synthetic formation of an *egological* pole of a higher kind. To the extent that it is first of all an original identification of time, the egological synthesis produced in the encounter differs in its meaning from the egological synthesis carried out in recollection. The truth is that the necessary connection obtaining between temporality and ego-ness in general is no less revealed in the case of recollection than in that of the presentification through the *Einfuehlung*: but here the egological pole of the synthesis is not the I itself, but the intersubjective temporal unity of the *we*.

The *Einfuehlung* establishes a distance in the present between me and the other I, along with a shared present in contemporaneity. Furthermore, the other is known as having his own past and his own future. If, on the one hand, I rediscover myself as present in the continuous retention of the I just passed to which, by operating, I become united with, and I discover myself as the past by turning back to the I which I once was, the other also becomes known as contemporary with his past and his future, not in the mode of mere distance, but of *shared* distance. Contemporaneity is the fundamental form of any intersubjective temporal synthesis. Yet, it presupposes further shared dimensions – at least in the sense of possible sharing. The extraneous past may no longer be accessible to me and it could remain totally unknown: in principle, however, it can be rediscovered and identified: "In this respect, we must reflect on the fact that, while I fulfill a radically intuitive *Einfuehlung*, I can identify my living present and my bygone past which, with that of the other, can be reawakened through recollection. Furthermore, if the other remembers a preceding past in which he was not the object of my *Einfuehlung*, this remembered past can then become accessible to me. To the extent that a section of his and my time can be identified, temporal togetherness can also be identified."[74]

My other, with which I am in a temporally shared dual identification, is not accessible to me only in what he himself is now, has been or wants to be. Since he is my "intentional repetition", he in turn has others which are directly appresented to him. The unity of temporal and egological identification is repeatable to infinity. I learn of others through my other. He is for me, as I am for him, a center of infinite mediations. The contemporaneous present which we

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have initially constituted as identification between me and my other, is extended to include a shared totality of presents in their original modality.[75] Since such an identification implies temporal togetherness, we find at the transcendental foundation of "objective" time and "objective" humanity, the infinitely open present of the intersubjective totality. The constitution of time cannot be separated from the constitution of subjective otherness, and the intersubjective sharedness of the encounter is always also temporal sharedness.

To understand the meaning of the dialectic between distance and sharedness, between the identified and the separated, is to clarify the reasons for Husserl's orientation towards a monadologic perspective. The single monad's own time (*Selbstzeit*) is the *form of existence (Existenzform)* of its subjective life: for it (time) the "monads" are what they are, have a style, and are centered in their own egological immanence.[76] Their transcendental times are the "forms of their self-enclosed individuality."[77] They are separated, not only as mere bodies, but also as "souls".[78] The separation of the monad is its factual absoluteness, the irrepeatability of its time, and its being once and for all. The intersubjective temporal synthesis is not a real extension of my living time, as if I were to take possession of the infinite repetition. The individual, as the center of repetitive temporal mediation, *is once and for all*: "Animated individuals, not only in terms of their own bodies, but already in themselves, are 'separated' individuals – yet, this word is not suited, although the souls are indivisible and even in this precise sense of the term they are individuals. What comes under scrutiny here is the other meaning of once-for-all of being which the souls retain not only to the extent that they are circumstantiated in an already given universal time, but because they are by themselves, by their own temporal being, intentionally including the other temporality which is essentially other."[79] Separation (*Trennung*) is therefore insurmountable: "On the other hand, this separation does not prevent, rather, it is the condition which makes possible the monads' 'identification', i.e., so that they can participate in a community. Yet, what this means is that they co-exist. Moreover: they are monads co-existing in the plural, as another monad's possibility of being."[80] In its effective actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) every monad implies the possibility of being of the other monad. But the community's actuality is the community itself constituted in the presentification through the *Einfuehlung*, between me and my you, the community of *existence* with *existence*, and in the originally intersubjective temporal form: temporal contemporaneity. In the intersubjective encounter, the identification concerns the integrity of the subject's life: not the mere temporality, but "filled time".[81] Furthermore, the validity produced in the identification concerns being itself.

---

75. All the primordial presents are joined in an intersubjective present. Cf. Manuscript A-V-5, p. 82.
76. For time as *Existenzform*, see Manuscript C-17-I, p. 4.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
78. The term "soul", which will be used again, should not worry the reader; it only indicates the animation of the material body.
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.*
81. For an elaboration of the notion of *erfuellte Zeit*, see *ibid*, pp. 3-4.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Co-existence (*Koexistenz*) is the fullness of the intersubjective temporal form which is realized in the distance temporally shared by living existences, in themselves primordial and centered in their own proper living time. Thus, it is not "an empty being together, but for me a being-there-for-me, a being 'common' to me, in such a way that my being, by presentifying another, experiences and at the same time can experience that it experiences itself as presentifying."[82]

Let us deal with this differently. Man in the world (*mundaner Mensch*) has, to the extent that he is a material body, a spatial extension and an objective duration. Considered as bodies, men interact in a relation of reciprocal exteriority (*Aussereinander*). But man's being in the world and in time is not resolved in this objectification: the "monad" does not have a time outside itself, nor does it refer to other monads in an already constituted objectivity of the time in which the material bodies are reciprocally ordered. The monad is itself already a self-contained "world". It is the transcendental foundation of every temporal constitution: "the 'world' of the individual monad has its own world as a form of co-existence of its 'realities', i.e., the time of being and the time of the soul's life. All of its life, all of its acts, its association, its persistance of adaptability once established, of habits, etc., flow in this time. Here everything has 'its own time', i.e., its own duration, its beginning and its end within total time, which is the very monad, the very concrete soul, to the extent that it is filled with contents in a necessary continuity, assumed precisely in itself and for itself, once its material body has been abstracted."[83]

My time is always individuated and distinct from the time of the other: it is necessarily separated like the spatial localization of my body and that of someone else. But does temporal separation follow, through some kind of parallelism, from material separation? "Could the souls be contemporaneous and situated one after the other, temporally coexisting, only through the tie with material bodies, therefore through *methexis*, with universal natural time?"[84]

The material body is in spatial time (*Raumzeit*): in the objective temporal totality of nature. Its real being is determined by the participation in this totality. Its concreteness is always relative because it is mediated from "circumstances" and determined within the natural-causal nexus.[85] Certainly, the soul participates in the spatial temporality of bodies because it is always necessarily "embodied". But if we consider man in his specific subjective being, we must emphasize that bodily co-existence "presupposes" a purely internal co-existence: a "nexus of souls" (*seelischer Zusammenhang*).[86] The subject's concrete absoluteness – its being in itself and for itself – is not and cannot be mere separation. If we pose this problem in traditional terms, we could ask: what defines the soul's "substantiality"? "The answer, evidently, must be something like: souls are not only in and for themselves, they are human I-subjects in the concretion of their fluid life considered as purely psychic. But,

82. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as such, in their monadic temporality, they are not being in and for themselves. They are also and essentially in actual and potential community, in actual and potential connections, in which the *commercium* the 'frequenting' in its multiple forms is only a particularity."[87]

The relation between monads is such that *they* penetrate each other (*sie gehe einander an*): "souls are not only for themselves, but they *penetrate* each other."[88] This means: the subject is such and it is concrete only because of this relational structure. Because of it the I has a style, a life and a body. The *Einfuehlung*, the comprehensive encounter of the other, is the original mode of *penetration*.[89] Another I is given to me, *it is (ist da)* in my present as other and it "penetrates" me. Through the *Einfuehlung* "I refer to a second I and to his life. Through it he *is* for me immediately as other and he penetrates *me*; to the extent that he is another, he already *penetrates me* due to the fact that before any interaction with him, *eo ipso* I not only experience his life, as soon as it actually comes into being for me (and it thus offers itself in the always determined sphere of intuitive possibilities), but I co-live, co-perceive, co-believe, co-judge, co-agree in refuting, doubting, congratulating, fearing together, etc."[90] At this point we can conclude our preliminary attempt to define the meaning of Husserl's constitutive theory of subjective otherness and we are now started on a direct consideration of the themes inherent and deriving from the verification of the "original sharing" (*Urvergemeinschaftung*) of life and existence of the I and of his other.

III.

> "At the end it will appear clearly – I think – that the 'ahistorical Husserl' only temporarily distanced himself from history (which in reality had always been present to him), precisely in order to deepen the method to the point of being able to ask scientific questions about it." – Husserl[91]

In posing the theme of subjective otherness, phenomenology comes to the very ground of the I's *self-being*. By itself this is not at all surprising: the initial phenomenological operation started out from my concrete existence. Who can start me on the path of a radical conscious questioning (*presa di coscienza*) other than *myself*, who decides to undertake a philosophical reflection in the midst of the crisis of the obvious and already given truth, of the very undisputed truth

87. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
88. *Ibid.* Here Husserl's *angehen* is rendered as *to penetrate*.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
90. *Ibid.*
91. From a letter of Husserl to G. Misch dated Freiburg, November 27, 1930. Quoted from A. Diemer, *Edmund Husserl, Versuch einer systematischen Darstellung seiner Phaenomenologie* (Meisenheim a.G., 1956), p. 394.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and reality of both my and of the world's being? It is precisely I myself who already knows of having a name and a body, of having been born once, and of having a "life" and a "history" of my own. Scepticism is this re-questioning of the concrete and already known truth of my being: the sceptical shadow annihilates the already known into the unknown, the already true into the possibility of falsity. The sceptical crisis discloses the field of philosophical reflection: it refuses to accept what has already been accepted, and to believe what has already been believed simply because it has been accepted and it has been believed. It wants *to see*. In the decision we have lost our knowing for ourselves to be already in the world and reality in its transparent and enigmatic being there in front of us along with our very name, birth, and possible death. If we do not want to renounce the responsibility of truth, to the point of accepting the obvious daily knowing-already in its undisputed indisputability, we must go to the foundation: through and beyond scepticism. In the dehistorization and in the disindividuation of the philosophical decision, we come to the *ego* which, to the extent that it is deprived of every concreteness, is not properly an I. Rather, it is an egological form or an invariant structure: not a subject, but "egoness".[92] The analysis directed at ascertaining the formal character of the ego leads to the clarification of essential connections which bind subject and time. Egological identity (*ipseita*) has no meaning unless it is temporal flowing, and continually re-established self-identity. If it is assumed as atemporal identity, it becomes annihilated as egoness. Its being is not only a flowing or a fluid life, but a temporal self-sharing. It is a self-distancing: a self-projecting towards a future I. The ego's temporal immanence necessarily and constantly transcends itself. In becoming temporalized, the ego-ness which hitherto could not be defined as either one or many "becomes individuated" by specifying itself as an identity which "changes" and as a unity which "renders itself" many. "By departing from myself and by penetrating the transcendental, the question of the infinity of the transcendental multiplicity of subjects becomes disclosed, along with the question of the infinity of temporalization."[93] This "process" begins and ends within the egological form. Thus, it should not be idealistically mistaken for a real production.

The egoness considered here is the initial solipsistic ego. As long as I remain at this level I am a prisoner of the form and I cannot discover myself as I really am: an embodied subject and a man in the world. This is precisely the problem: the *fact* that I am a subject in the already given world, among subjects intentionally referred to me and to the world, and present with me in it.[94] The study of the experience of the other leads to this in order to discover how it is that *someone else* has meaning: I must comprehend what I really am and what the other really is. Thus, we find ourselves considering the dimension of how to fill the form, not egoness in general and its temporality, but the very embodied ego in its own living time and in his relation of real and factual co-existence with the other. Are we thus forced to verify the passage of phenomenology to

92. For a discussion of *invariante Struktur*, see Manuscript C-II-I, p. 3. This manuscript is 28 pages long and was probably written in 1923.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"existentialism"? We will deal with this question only to the extent that it will free our discourse from possible equivocation.

It is not easy to untie the crucial knot that ambiguously joins phenomenology and existentialism. Concerning this problem, today there are many current opinions and some unsure attempts, but it does not seem to us that there is any even approximately adequate answer. The question is first of all historical. It is a matter of fully considering what existentialism, and Heidegger in particular, has drawn from Husserlian thought and, moreover, its meaning. Furthermore, a certain problematic which comes to light from Husserl's unpublished manuscripts is suggested, at least in the titles, by a reading of *Sein und Zeit*. But no serious historiographic result will be possible in principle, unless we fully understand the different contexts within which similar themes are investigated by Husserl and Heidegger respectively.

The fact that Heidegger analyzes Being-there (*Dasein*) because this is the source of access to Being (*Sein*) is well known. Because of this, Heidegger forbids us to enter and to remain on the transcendental ground on which Husserl had arrived in undertaking the project of a rigorous foundation of knowledge. The *epoche* is limited to the criticism of the already-understood, of "obviousness", and the reductive operation is put aside to the extent that, through it, one reaches the ground of egological formality. In this regard, Heidegger is explicitly against Husserl. Having reached the problem of the "who" of *Dasein*, this is how he describes the Husserlian path: "But is it not contrary to the rules of all sound method to approach a problematic without sticking to what is given as evident in the area of our theme? And what is more indubitable than the givenness of the 'I'? And does not this givenness tell us that if we aim to work this out primordially, we must disregard everything else that is 'given' – not only a 'world' that is (*einer seienden 'Welt'*), but even the Being of other 'I's? The kind of 'giving' we have here is the mere, formal, reflective awareness of the 'I'; and perhaps what it gives is indeed evident. This insight even affords access to a phenomenological problematic in its own right, which has in principle the signification of providing a framework as a 'formal phenomenology of consciousness'."[95] Heidegger's criticism of this position is as follows: "Yet even the positive Interpretation of Dasein which we have so far given, already forbids us to start with the formal givenness of the 'I', if our purpose is to answer the question of the 'who' in a way which is phenomenally adequate. In clarifying Being-in-the-world we have shown that a bare subject without a world never 'is' proximally, nor is it ever given. And so in the end an isolated 'I' without Others is just as far from being proximally given."[96] Thus, Heidegger abandons the formal phenomenology of consciousness along with the transcendental discourse to which the radical questioning of the phenomenological reduction leads, and subordinates the egological component to the merely "existential".

---

95. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tuebingen, 1953), p. 115; English translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York and Evanston, 1961), p. 151.
96. *Ibid.*, German p. 116, English p. 152.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Husserl the existent becomes thematized without having the coherence of the phenomenological discourse being broken or deviated. Consequently, the method of inquiry and the meaning of its results is algotegher different. This is already clear from the fact that in Husserl *Dasein* has essentially the meaning of *presence*. As soon as I reduce the egological being to my own being and I become my own concrete presence to myself thus constituting upon this foundation the other as apperceptively present to me, I have thematized the existent. I recognize myself in my *Dasein* by recognizing the other and knowing myself as a perceiving agent in a present constituted in the retention of a past and in the protention of a future, as a style through time. I rediscover my existential concreteness and correlatively that of the other along with our co-existing since I apprehend myself not as a mere ego in a mere temporal form, but as myself in a filled time, in my individuated corporeality and in my *history*. If we remain within a rigorous phenomenological consideration of *Dasein*, we will be immediately forced to consider the theme of the historical-intersubjective sharing: "In an absolute consideration every ego has its own history and he exists only as the subject of a history: his own. And every communicating community of absolute ego's or of absolute subjectivities – in whose fullness of concretion inheres the constitution of the world – has its 'passive' and 'active' history, and it exists only in this history."[97]

We can now try to indicate, in the light of these considerations, the fundamental direction of Husserl's investigations and the meaning of their last turning towards the theme of monadology, intersubjectivity, and history. Let us return once again to the phenomenological re-evaluation of the "much discussed but little understood" Copernican revolution, in which Husserl recognizes the "eternal meaning of Kantian philosophy".[98] The transcendental inversion denounces the obviousness of the natural attitude in posing every problem as a problem of immanent givenness. Phenomenology resumes this intention and finds it necessary to clarify the meaning of the subjective intentional pole of the phenomenological field. On this point Husserl has been misunderstood from the very beginning. Even those "who had distinguished themselves the most as excellent phenomenologists"[99] saw in the first volume of *Ideas* an inadmissible deviation in view of the problematic of *The Logical Investigations*. Against those who saw in the positing of the egological thematic the advent of some kind of idealistic metaphysics, he reiterates the unity and the coherence of his procedure and polemically restates that to separate phenomenology and "transcendental idealism" is equivalent to misunderstanding the "most profound meaning of the intentional method."[100] Thus, the misunderstanding was double: we became even more convinced that phenomenology was "idealism" and we misunderstood not only the "most profound meaning of the intentional method", but

97. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie II*, p. 506.
98. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie I*, p. 240.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
100. *Cartesian Meditations*, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-80, and *Erste Philosophie II*, p. 181, where it is claimed that phenomenology is nothing more than "the first rigorously scientific form of transcendental idealism", an assertion often repeated by Husserl.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also the meaning of the phenomenological re-evaluation of the idealistic intention. Instead, what was meaningful was not generally noticed: by developing the egological theme Husserl arrived at the position of intersubjectivity and at the correlative theme of monadological individuation. The initial critical project concludes in the recognition of monadic intersubjectivity as "primary being".[101] Phenomenological radicalism here reaches its final leg. It is now possible to claim that no problem holds a privilege in principle so that it cannot be dealt with by the rigorous knowledge of the phenomenon. Every problem is philosophical and its positing is legitimate only if carried out within this knowledge: "Phenomenology does not claim that it stops in front of the 'great and final' problems."[102] Phenomenology's anti-metaphysical attitude on the basis of which it has even been possible to smuggle antiquated philosophical systems, does not have its meaning in being in principle indifferent to "metaphysics" and in being consequently able to be filled by whatever metaphysical content. Rather, it expresses itself precisely in the fact that in principle *it does not exclude metaphysics* and it is not neutral in front of problems traditionally entrusted to mythological or pre-philosophical (religious or metaphysical) elaborations. In this respect, the viewpoint that makes of philosophy different "private opinions concerning the world" is brought to its extreme consequences of dissolution, while the "positive" and "empirical" unveiling of "reality" as the essential task of philosophical research seems to be restated.

Posing a phenomenological task is nonsense unless there is actually something. Thus we can state a basic principle which up until now has remained implicit. The foundation of the possibility of phenomenology is the *Faktum*. First of all, and this is why we are faced with a statement both rigorously realistic as well as rigorously idealistic, there is the fact that I am: my apodictic factuality. "I am? Certainly, I am! And I say: 'I am' apodictically so. I am as the ego of my now flowing life, as the ego which constantly experiences the world which is and which carries out the identification, and can constantly recognize the world in this identification."[103] My "I am" is not subject to doubt: "I am" and I reflexively know this "in thinking, I think of myself as the experienced in self-experience, as the experienced having a life, a consciousness, faculties, etc. In thinking I determine myself as the experienced itself: I recognize myself as an apodictic being."[104] Reflective thought does not produce my being and it adds nothing to it because being does not follow from thinking: it is only its intentional correlate.[105] Reflection reveals the transcendentality of my factual being. I am the fact that I am. But it implies "monadic subjectivity", the others' subjectivities, and their historicity which has constituted me in my own historical factuality. I can say that my very historicity embraces within the mode of reality and of possibility all the relative monadic historicities.[106] Further-

101. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 156.
102. *Ibid.*
103. Manuscript A-VI-23, p. 9. For an elaboration of "mein apodiktisches Faktum", see Manuscript A-VII-11, p. 16.
104. Manuscript A-VI-23, p. 10.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
106. Cf. Manuscript A-VII-11, p. 16.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more, in my *Faktum* I am the ultimate I. I am in temporal atemporality of the living present and "I carry within me the monadic totality, history, and the historical constitution of the world as the 'transcendental totality of the world' (monadic totality)."[107] As Husserl put it, "the concrete and individuated I is the *Weltall*. This revelation is categorically absurd. Similarly, it would be absurd to speak of the individuated I, or of the transcendental Husserlian subject, as of the absolute. But the revelation, absurd on the categorical level, is not so in the pre-categorical level. Here subjectivity in the first person, to the extent that it is my own, is the subjectivity in which all the ego's in the first person are revealed to themselves as universally their own. I don't 'live' this universality as the universality of everyone else, yet, it is the universality of all the first persons *like myself*."[108]

Factuality means pre-givenness and, as an ego of the living present, I am given first, and I am in the pre-givenness of the world. My reflective aposteriority, in which I claim that "I am" is the indication of the apriority of my factual pre-givenness.[109] What is a priori is I in my *Faktum* and in the connections which are revealed to denaturalized reflection: a priori it is the very pre-givenness in the style of its historical being: " . . . I see that in pre-givenness I have the world, that I myself could know and I do know, that I have already discovered this historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*), that I have already become an autonomous man and that I have carried this autonomy to a free and actual realization by obtaining in it an a priori knowledge. With that I have already obtained in my own pre-givenness and from my reshaping of it, a form for historicity (*Historizitaet*) of pre-givenness, itself inherent in my own pre-givenness, which is historical (*historisch*) and inclusive of its own historicity (*Historizitaet*) as pre-givenness."[110]

If we say that the I-man, in his monadic and factual concreteness, is the objective formation of transcendental subjectivity, we do not thereby mean to reintroduce an "idealistic" perspective according to which a hypostasized and reified objectivity generates the embodied and individuated ego in a real dialectical process. Rather, we wish to emphasize the *possibility*, immanent in its very being factual of this factual ego as an "object in the world", of transcending this objectivity.

"Consciousness" is always naturalized in a body and in a natural environment. Yet, it is never mere nature. Through his body, which is the indication of his participation in inert materiality and the condition of his factual being, the human-ego lives *in the world* by exercising a *praxis* upon it. His temporal being is not a mere upholding – time does not pass by above him – nor is it a mere succession of himself to himself. Man is not a thing (a *res*) but active intentionality and total *praxis* through which is expressed the transcendentality

107. Manuscript A-VII-11, p. 17. This manuscript was written in 1925 and 1932, and is 133 pages long.
108. Cf. Enzo Paci, "Nuove Ricerche Fenomenologiche", in *Aut Aut*, n. 68, March 1962, p. 105.
109. Cf. Manuscript A-VII-11, p. 18.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 19. Husserl does not clearly differentiate between *Geschichtlichkeit* and *Historizitaet*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his factual being defining this being as properly *historical*.

Man is in the world as operating upon the things of the world through labor, modification, invention, and in the very self-expression which is originally a mode of subjective *praxis*. Temporality has its content in this life activity through which man realizes himself as man in time by "humanizing" the world: "Humanization is the constant process of being human, self-humanization, being in a constant genesis of self-formation and humanization of the world."[111]

To the extent that he is individuated *in* and *through* sharing, man finds himself in his being, in a concrete temporal process already started and proceeding. *I am in history:* I am in an already humanized world which expresses its preceding genesis.[112] I can go back in time, I can know of the coming of man into the world first and foremost as an animal species among other species, of his savage life, of his "struggle for existence",[113] and of his gradual adaptation to natural conditions. In a symbiosis with nature, man becomes human and he humanizes nature: this becomes "culture" and "nature spiritualized by reason" which becomes historicized in the history of man.[114]

My being in history is this participation to total historicity which is primarily human, but *ipso facto* also of nature. Nature is historical by departing from me, from my historicity, even in the ages that have preceded man's *coming into the world.* The natural becoming I come to know through the sciences of the history of nature is a becoming which I place in time. I comprehend it in its evolving until something like the animal "homo" has been generated and he has initiated his own "history" and, finally, by indicating in the events that have preceded him "what was before him": the pre-human and the "non-spiritual". In Husserl, the "historical" has this total meaning: it grasps man's being in the world starting from the original natural-material matrix, up to the highest spiritual and natural formations.

History and nature refer to a total transcendental history: mundane historicity, writes Husserl, is the formation of transcendental historicity.[115] That does not mean that historical factuality was permeated by a transcendental meaning, but that in it remains hidden a meaning of absolute foundation. "Human nature and history become transcendental indications of the unity of a transcendental history, in which transcendental subjectivity is essentially, in every transcendental genesis, became-becoming *in infinitum* and has, in this became-becoming, its constant being. Its being is historical. Its infinity is historical infinity which is concealed to the point of complete incomprehensibility in the spatio-temporal infinity of nature. It raises to a relative comprehensibility in human history, even if all remains transcendentally concealed: but in its being concealed, it becomes comprehensible to the phenomenologist."[116]

111. Manuscript A-V-10, p. 25.
112. *Ibid.*
113. Cf. Manuscript C-I, p. 1. This manuscript is 6 pages long, and was written in 1934.
114. *Ibid.*
115. Cf. Manuscript A-VII-11, p. 22.
116. Manuscript A-V-10, p. 27.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From naive "realism", through sceptic and solipsistic "idealism", we have come to a rigorous thematization of being itself, and having excluded the "existentialist" solution, we have begun to comprehend this being as essentially "historical". The term "historicity", however, still remains necessarily empty of meaningful content. In order to attempt a rough definition of it, rather than accepting the allusive suggestions that the term entails in its ordinary usage, we must thematically recapture that dimension of "property" in the sense of operating living corporeality. Of this, we already possess an initial and essential element in the definition of egological being. Thus, we go back to what seems to be most distant from the ordinary meanings of "historical": the original level of egological life and primordiality as a system of perception and instinct. We come to this terrain by operating a kind of abstraction through which I subtract from the I that I am now, in the fullness of my faculties, all that belongs to me as a reflecting and consciously projecting "personal" I. In a way, "I impoverish" my whole cluster of attributes which define me as a man among other men. This abstractive operation must now be reinterpreted as temporal reflection.

Earlier, we asserted the essential temporality of the ego considered as such. In its reflective turning towards itself, the ego finds its now within a past and future horizon: it experiences its becoming in a *genesis*. Let us consider more closely the mode of this genetic self-constitution: it is not a matter of a simple line which goes from the past, to the present, on to the future. Actually, the location of this constitution is always the present of the ego. The past, periodically thematized through recollection, is the present already gone by, now apprehended in this present. But it is now in an immobile fixity. It constantly flows with the living-present flowing of the I. Actually, the past presents itself from time to time provided with an increase of meaning which it derives from the successive living and expressing of the ego. The egological progressing towards the future increases the reflective regression of the ego upon its own past. The concrescing upon itself of this past is correlative with the progressive genesis of my present emerging from the genesis sedimented in my past. This, however, is true only in a relative sense. To the potentialization of the past deriving from life towards the future is also connected its continuous and progressive depotentialization. If the I considered purely in its egological being is in a *genesis*, by reflectively returning to it, in the constant self-impoverishment (*Verarmung*), it comes to a limit: *the egological birth*.

How can we think of this ego in its initial limit? It does not have any experience in the proper sense. Its experiencing does not have any past experiencing. Its sphere of proximity is not yet a "world". It is a *wretched I (armselig Ich)*: pure corporeal apprehension of what is immediately around it, while any mediation is excluded in principle. The wretched I is to be defined as mere perceptive corporeality. It does not perceive "objects" but simply "perceptions". The *wretched I* is perceptivity and corporeality: yet it is already an I. In the perceiving self-reference, the body is in fact already egologically formed: "This sphere of proximity still has the living body as its *nucleus* in its being referred to itself. As an I, it has the wretched I which, in its state of poverty, disposes only in the body, with the faculties which are its own."[117]

117. Manuscript C-8-I, p. 2. This manuscript is 24 pages long, and was written

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus, we ask: If the *ego* finds as its limit the living body as already given, aren't we faced with the problem of its own genesis? The corporeal and perceiving *wretched I* is the limiting I, but it itself departs from a *genesis*. The beginning cannot be a sudden coming to light of the I, but a being in the beginning: a beginning and an already began. It is not a matter of an *I which is wide awake*, but of an *I which awakens*: "Since the genesis is essentially under way as soon as the I is *awakened*, in the same way that I have a perceptive field (even if it is not yet a field of things), we have as a limit *the awakening I* which becomes I-man, growing to a 'life' and constituting itself always more consciously for itself."[118] Then, the *corporeal birth* of the very I comes into question.

An analogous reduction to mere corporeality, which contains an even more profound set of problems, concerns the possible ending of the I. While before we have been concerned with seeing the past from the present, in this case we must deal with the modality of the present which discloses the future: not of recollection, but of the I as a projecting being in the present. The future is for the I its *possibility* and the I of the present which opens *itself towards the future* is the *I can*: its originally corporeal practicality.[119] The body *can* when it is in a "normal" state, but in sickness or in misfortune, it experiences its eventual failure. The constant and progressive degeneration of my body starting from a crucial moment (maturity) is certainly conceivable. My body's degeneration is also the depotentialization of the future. The horizon of the possible and of my practical present within which I always live becomes limited. This restriction obtains not just towards the future, but also towards the past: "Undoubtedly, a certain genesis takes place all the time because the I is always presented with a new apperceived mundane. But with his strength decreasing, the surrounding world becomes restricted along with the present, since the sphere of attainability shrinks (the relative 'distances' become increasingly longer), the sphere of operative formations which could be projected and executed diminishes, and therefore the possible future becomes restricted and decreases. But the same thing happens with the past because of the decrease of the strength of memory, as the strength of the availability of the past."[120]

How is the limit of this process, i.e., the *end* possible? Can it be imagined as a "dreamless sleep" or as a being completely deprived of any mundane possibility? But how can we experience this end which provisionally appears as a "dreamless sleep"? And if this analogy makes sense, can we "awaken" from it? Only the gradual self-destruction of the body can be experienced: not its total destruction. The progressive decrease of our experiencing only foretells us about not being able of experiencing any more.[121] Having reached a limit, the ego can no longer dispose of a body, and, through it, of a world: "But how can we think of this? Is this ego, then, still the ego of the beginning? But then it should be an 'ego which awakens' affected by distinct sense data. Or else it is not yet an awakened ego, as the ego of the beginning before the beginning (if this makes

October 1929.
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any sense), still without distinctions: a being and a living in itself completely undifferentiated. But here we ask: does this make sense or doesn't it inhere to the essence of the I, the being-protented-toward-something, either this or that, to the different, and is not the I a polarization of living which presupposes counter poles in a constitutive process of objective formation?"[122] The phenomenological problem of death questions the very intentional structure of consciousness. Yet, it must be brought down to it, if it is to be considered as an authentic philosophical problem. The difficulties which arise at this point and the prudence required in dealing with them, explain the sudden stop in the manuscript cited so far. As soon as he poses the above question, Husserl observes that all that has been said has meaning only starting from the "mundane and concretely developed living", and that the inferences which can be drawn are to be understood within a certain abstraction. What we can assert while remaining within the data of description is only the progressive decrease of bodily forces. This can be brought to the limit and conceived as the ceasing of all conscious living and therefore also of the ego as the pole of identity of this living and of its own faculties.[123]

Husserl often comes back to the theme of birth and death in the manuscripts – and not by accident. What is involved is the defining of the meaning of monadic finitude while evading a "metaphysical" structuring of the finite. The enigma of finitude obtains within the arch of life between birth and death, within which man becomes in a genesis which is psychical to the extent that it is corporeal. On the one hand there is the problem of an internal consideration of the "parallelism" between the psychical and the corporeal becoming, while on the other we have that relative to the comprehension of the zero point of this "parallelism": birth, in which the theme of the genesis arises for the body as a problem of his *generation*.

IV.

The body is *born* in the corporeal encounter of the father and the mother, and it is a body not only generated but ultimately generating in a new encounter which is originally his. Does this express in that a mere event of the living body, or does it contain a determinate form of pre-meaning to the extent that it is intertwined to the process of the formation of personal-human meanings? If we come upon this risky ground, it is only because we cannot seriously think of an eruption of meaning from what is merely material. On the other hand, there are sufficient indications to hold that matter itself (here we are speaking of living matter) is basic to all of this. Thus, we can understand the motives which push Husserl to repeatedly pose the problem of a phenomenology of instinctive life, and in particular, the body's sexual life. We will attempt to deal with this question very quickly.

In the satisfaction of sexual desire we find the original material inter-subjective encounter which procreates a new living matter: "Sexual instinct, the struggle for the woman. Sexual love as human: not as desire for a material thing,

122. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but desire for an egological unification, even if, initially, it is above all the unification in a sharing of sexual enjoyment. Internally it is a passionate will to share and to accomplish and furthermore, it is a passionate will permeated by repetition: in the end, but not always, also a sharing of life and a being as parents."[124]

In the internal corporeal co-penetration of the sexual pairing, the distance of the bodies becomes transcended in a new primordial unity: "In the simple fulfillment of the primary mode we never have two separate fulfillments of each drive in the one and in the other primordiality, but rather one unity arises through the reciprocal fulfillment of the two primordialities."[125] In the encounter there is also the reciprocal *recognition*, i.e., self-recognition as sexual body in a determined way, and of the other as an animal of its own species. The real problem lies in understanding how a properly "human" and "rational" world comes to be "progressively" constituted from such a recognition and from the human-animal world of impulses. The basic question that Husserl asks himself in numerous and impartial analyses concerns the possibility of posing the problem of a "universal teleology" which would establish a continuity between what is not yet constituted and what is already constituted. In temporal terms, it is the problem of a teleology whereby the simultaneous intersubjective present in which the awakening monad finds itself could be considered as the "making explicit" of an implicit shared temporality, or, better, of a "pre-temporality": "The new awakening of the ego's as self-sufficient, as the centers of acts which are related in a surrounding world and therefore the awakening of the constitutions of 'beings' and lastly of an horizon of the world as a teleology included in the universal teleology, as a universal intentionality which is always 'prior' in the continual vitality of a unitary and conscious community of monads. This is the community of universally constituted drives which has, corresponding to it, a world which always brings anew the monads to a new formation and to their development. *In this form the totality of the monads gradually comes to self-consciousness* and attains its maximum universality as a human community."[126] Departing from myself as a "scientific man, I reconsider my and our monadic being, and on the basis of this I systematically go on" – and only on this basis of a conscious and awakened life[127] – I can legitimately go back to what is not yet constituted. I can regress from the world in which I already am, to the world "before" its constitution, from my temporality and from intersubjective temporality to my intersubjective pre-temporality. At this point, the Husserlian analyses dealing with man's pre-natal state, with the description of the embryonic pre-world, with the gradual constitution of the intersubjective world in the relation of the first infancy to the mother, etc., suddenly come to a halt. Husserl leaves all of this in much uncertainty and incompleteness.[128]

124. Manuscript A-V-10/2, pp. 139-140.
125. Manuscript E-III-5. An English translation of this manuscript has appeared in *Telos* no. 4, Fall 1969, pp. 176-180, under the title "Universal Teleology".
126. "Universal Teleology", *op.cit.*, p. 179.
127. Husserl stresses this particularly in Manuscript C-17-V, p. 33.
128. For further analyses of Husserl's investigations concerning these problems,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

V.

Within awakened life we find ourselves in a domain of "human" meanings, but we also know that we are in the continuity of a genesis. That the body is generated locates our own *inheriting ourselves*, whereby we are what we are in our personal history intertwined with the histories which we encounter on the background of a common intersubjective *heritage*: it locates it in an already human, original, and unconscious form of heredity. The *transmitting (tradieren)* in its broadest possible sense, is the form of this genetic-temporal becoming of man in the world. The reciprocal identification of human ego's, which has hitherto been considered in the distinction of its different layers of meaning, here becomes specified, essentially and comprehensively, as *meaningful transmission (Sinnuebertragung) and inheritance of meanings (Sinnerbschaft).* The *transmitting* implies the temporality within which identification obtains as a process. Being in the tradition, in its total meaning, implies inherence to a nexus whereby I am what I am and extracting for me from others my personal being in a necessary reshaping. Human generation is not vacuous, but means to be generated in a possible personal constitution. It is the effective transmission of typical properties and not of the mere monadic egological form of being. The awakening monad contains the transmitted abilities as the possibility of awakening. Yet, it is a new monad with a new *hyle*. The paternal abilities are its own precisely through a joining together which is itself the way of being different through others.[129]

This I which is reflectively discovered as absolute in a living and flowing atemporal present, is man in the world, in finite time, and part of an infinitely repeatable generative nexus. He is a procreated individual. But the procreation is already an *original tradition (Urtradition)*: a transmitting of meaning *which is primary*. All of this obtains on the nocturnal level of biological life, along the lines of whose development we find the "tradition in the sharing of awakened individuals". Only then, in the *Wachheit*, is the transmitting *historical*, i.e., a tradition in the ordinary sense: "The absolute and the individual absolute ego's – each of which is rendered mundane in the finitude of a temporal segment; the finite ego in the chain of its generation, the generative infinity. The original tradition of the generation; those who have been generated who transmit in the *transacting (tradierung)* their individual being to the generated individual; the tradition in the sharing of awakened individuals; what is my own is stamped upon others; identification of individuals; associative products of changing together in the individuals and reciprocal internal transpassing of self and other; therefore, the originally generative heredity of the tradition in the usual sense

---

see Toulemont, *op.cit.*, pp. 82-88.

129. Cf. Manuscript C-17-V, pp. 31-32. This manuscript is 47 pages long, and was written during the summer of 1930. For the expression "to inherit myself", cf. Manuscript A-V-5, p. 3. It is to be pointed out that Husserl applies the term *"Tradition"* also to the single personal I considered by himself (cf. Manuscript A-V-11, p. 10). Also, occasionally he refers to the personal life of the ego within the limits of birth and death as *"Historie"*, *"das Historische"*. Cf. Manuscript C-8-I, p. 11.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(historical tradition)."[130]

Let us consider the mode of constitution of awakened life by means of the experience of sleep which is immediately at our disposal. We only know of it in a limited way when we "fall asleep" (*Einschlafen*) and when we "awaken" (*Aufwachen*): the first taken as depotentialization and impoverishment of the life of consciousness in its psychic-corporeal faculties and the second as unexpected recovering of a perceptive field recognized as that which was even "before".[131] Between the two moments there is a pause: sleep. The dream and everything else contained in it – the very time of the dream which, having its own autonomous constitutive structure, is a "different" time – cannot fill this emptiness.[132] Whatever the case may be with sleeping life,[133] the fact remains that in falling asleep I have, e.g., gone to bed and upon awakening I "remember" it: I am *still* lying on the bed. "This 'still'," says Husserl, "is precisely the problem here."[134] Memory performs an essential function because through it I "regain the threads" of my temporality and of the temporality of my world by rediscovering, in addition to the pause, the unity of my duration and the identity of what surrounds me. We can generalize this result and claim that: "synthetic identification must come in every time such a spatial present is constituted in living perceptive temporalization and recollection reproduces a similar present which, in terms of the content, is determined and over-determined as the past. But this means neither 'identity' nor difference and similarity in the ordinary sense of the word."[135]

Awakened life is not a constant and inexhausted being awakened: its constance and that of the world present in it is constituted in the multiplicity of awakened-periods (*Wachperioden*) identified in the temporal synthesis. This result obtains first of all for my own life-domain, but it is already an indication for comprehending the constitutive modality of intersubjective awakened life as the life of the *universum* of awakened subjects and of their intentionally referred world. In this case, the periodically constituted individual singularity of the awakened I is itself a *period* of a broader temporal synthesis. Intersubjective awakened life and the intersubjective world constitute themselves in single-individual periods of birth and death. I awaken and in the genesis of my awakened life, which obtains through and beyond the pauses of sleep, I recognize myself in awakened intersubjectivity "as an infinite system of awakened ego's, which presupposes a system of 'sleeping' and of 'dead' ego's."[136] Awakened life is essentially transmitted (*tradierte Wachheit*), traditionally constituted and always constitutive of a new tradition. In spite of their fundamentally enigmatic character which renders the analyses exceptionally complex, birth and death must be reintroduced in dealing with the

130. Manuscript C-17-V, pp. 32-33.
131. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
133. For a further elaboration of this theme, see Ida Bona, "L'Interesse e la Fenomenologia del Sonno", in *Aut Aut* n. 64, pp. 362-365.
134. Manuscript C-17-V, p. 6.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

problem of the meaning of individual participation to the intersubjective nexus and of the internal connection between the intersubjective and the personal tradition: thus, birth and death not only cannot be considered as events rupturing intersubjective and interhistorical unity, rather, they must be considered as "connecting members"[137] through which this unity becomes possible.

My own and the extraneous tradition that I have constituted, are reciprocally and internally bound in the mediation of the intersubjective tradition. Shared life (*Gemeinschaftsleben*) is the life of "persons" in a continuous bond which is both actual and potential. Intersubjective historicity (*intersubjektive Historizitaet*) is not a "being-next-to-each-other of personal being and becoming, and of individual-personal historicities (tradition), but the unity of connected humanities, of bonds, and bonds of bonds, of multiple intertwinings, of continuously connected mediations which find in this being-related (*Verbundenheit*) their historicity, the unity of a (personally bound) human presence, and of a life in historical community which cannot be broken into a separate singularity of lives."[138] The form of the *reciprocal motivation* defines the complex relation of continuous mediation between the individual and the group. In its concrete temporal being the individual is in a tradition emerging from that of the community of which he is a part and which he himself co-constitutes: "Man is not only in the community, but to the extent that he develops in the internal sharing and he forms for and with it in reciprocal motivation, hence to the extent that from time to time he has become, he carried within himself the genesis arisen from the community, or, what is the same thing, he intentionally carries with himself his human educators. Naturally, this also concerns the formation through the tradition, i.e., the influx (the so-called *Nachwirkung*) of those men of the same humanity who have lived in earlier times."[139]

Events such as birth, illness, and death, my having been generated, the fact that I was born once and that I will die some day, present themselves in my experience. I also experience the elders who were born before me and I can foresee that after me and my generation other generations will follow. I recognize myself to be in a generative nexus infinitely open towards the past and towards the future. The world I now perceive in the renewed synthesis of my experiences – and which appears as such not only to me, but also to those who have grown up with me – is that same unique world recognizable in the infinite trespassing of generations. On the other hand, if there is a unity of my personal life encapsulated within the limits of birth and death, this unity is already surpassed and included in a broader unity of my generation as well as in that of the generations that have preceded and will follow me. I comprehend the unity of a history and of a tradition, which is both my history as well as the history of my generation, of my people, etc., moving towards flowing unities always

137. For an elaboration of *Brueckenglieder,* see Manuscript C-17-V, p. 17.
138. Manuscript A-V-7, p. 4.
139. Manuscript C-11-III, p. 8; this manuscript is 21 pages long, and was written in 1934. *Nachwirkung* indicates the effect which remains even after the cause has ceased to be.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

broader and more comprehensive.[140]

By elaborating the being of the subject as *history* and *relation* we can also correctly grasp the theme of *culture*, under which title we had originally subsumed every human-intersubjective meaning in general. This happens after we have forced ourselves to understand the meaning of the encounter even in the *first Einfuehlung.*[141] The very living body – which seemed to present itself in a kind of immediacy – has turned out to be both generating and generated in the human form of *transmitting*[142] in the generative mediation.

The community of which man is a genetic part is also an "animal" community. Considered from this viewpoint, man is merely the animal species "homo". Yet the properly human form of generation, as the transmission of meanings, is not purely natural, but *natural-personal.* Thus, the horizon of sharing within which man finds himself is a personal-cultural horizon of "people".[143] This is what distinguishes the human from the shared animal life: the animal is also in a community and in a genesis through which one can relatively trace a "spiritual" development from the embryonic beginnings all the way up to maturity and a relative "cultural" domain. But the animal can never become a person: its surrounding world is never primarily cultural and its genetic becoming is never *history*.

Only *man* is a historical being who contains history, makes history, and can become history as a being who realizes himself in his meaningfully productive temporal functioning: "Man as a person is the subject of a cultural world which is the correlate of the total personal community in which every person knows himself in relation to the cultural human world in which he lives. The animal does not consciously live in a cultural world. This evidently implies man is an historical being. He lives within a 'humanity' which is in historical becoming, in

140. Manuscript C-11-I, p. 25.

141. For the expression "first *Einfuehlung*", see Manuscript K-III.

142. Even if it is impossible here to deal with the vast and complex phenomenological theme of *Kultur*, it seems proper to emphasize that it cannot be resolved in a mere static description. It presupposes the consideration of the genesis of the type, the clarification of the way whereby, *within the totality of the productive manifestations of a determined historical life* it has been constituted and it has become valid. This makes possible a consideration of the meaning which does not proceed to depart by the obvious assumption of its "validity", but which is able to recognize it as the "validity of this present", to go back to genetic-historical motivations that have led to its sedimentation. Of the proposal implicit here attributing to socio-historical research a new task of revelation and foundation, there is in Husserl at least the presupposition, even if this aspect has been generally ignored by phenomenological literature. In this respect, the biased opinion according to which Husserl's perspective necessarily implied no interest for history has been particularly damaging. Yet, the final point of arrival of the long Husserlian path – when the first phenomenological password *"zu den Sachen selbst"* translates in the return to the *Lebenswelt* – is the recognition of the life of history in its complex dialectic as the ultimate foundation since in it every human and non-human meaning has its transcendental constitutive source.

143. Cf. Manuscript C-11-III, p. 11.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the becoming which makes history. This humanity is subjectivity as the carrier of the historical world. The expression does not mean life historically alive and constitutive of history, but the correlative surrounding world as a human surrounding world which, starting from man, from total humanity, it carries within itself spiritual meaning as ontic properties of realities and of their ontic historicity, and it has this meaning from human operating: from the interests, purposes, and systems of human purposes."[144]

Man's historicity is defined by his belonging in the world as uniquely individuated in the intersubjective mediation, and as total individual and shared *praxis*. Between the individual and the group, group and group, world and individual, and world and group, there is a *real reciprocal dialectic*, whose meaning must be periodically determined.

VI.

Now "I can" turn to this or that and go on with the vision and with the description. This "turning towards" is already a mode of activity,[145] but subjective practicality does not end in this contemplation: "Yet, the I is essentially active in another sense also. Starting from itself, through its own activity, the I communicates a modified meaning to what it experiences as being 'in the world', already with a determined meaning of being which it has because of the past (eventually, rather, necessarily through apperception), outlining the future of identical being."[146] Through my *praxis* I penetrate the already-given and I modify its being-so-already-become, in its form and in its eventual purpose: I produce a new effect (*Wirkung*). The world is not only what it is: its reality is *actuality (Wirklichkeit)*. It is a permanently sedimented product of a concrete operating past. This means that, to the extent that it is present to me which I am *now*, the *I-can*, it is essentially a *practical field for a possible actualization*: "Objectified subjectivity as human subjectivity in the transcendental self-constitution is in the world and, as such, not only does it come to know the world, but it shapes a world which already is. The world periodically given as an already apperceived world with a meaning of being starting from the subjective constitutive past, the world already-given to experience is not permanent actuality, but the practical field of realization."[147]

Praxis leads back to man's corporeal materiality. In this respect, primordiality must be understood as a system of the I-can. Through his body, the I-can performs on the surrounding world a constant and concrete reshaping. He can derive meaning from *mere nature* and he historicizes himself and nature. Ultimately, he is man-in-the-world in a human-world.

Living material corporeality comes into question here since *praxis* is *first* of all motivated by it: *the I-can is originally a response to need.*[148] In my concrete

144. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
145. Cf. Manuscript C-17-II, p. 14; this manuscript is 21 pages long, and was written between 1930 and 1931.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 12. See also Manuscript C-17-V, p. 25.
148. The problem of a phenomenology of need is clearly posed by Husserl, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

everyday life I am in need: everyday I *care (sorge)* for the satisfaction of my hunger and I am worried (*Vorsage*) about my tomorrow, since today's need appears as periodically repeated and as due to reappear: "Mere daily satisfactions have no permanent result. The appropriation and the eating of food produces its own consumption."[149]

"At the beginning" there is nothing but the body's unconditional hunger and the hunt for food for immediate satisfaction: the hunt is the body's original project while the food is that towards which he is already an I-can and through which he can remain one. Precisely to the extent that the threat of unsatisfied hunger is directed to the original possibility of the body, it is a threat of *death*, in front of which existence becomes anguished: "Hunger which remains unsatisfied: – the I's impotence to act: not only not-wanting-to, not only 'occasionally' unsatisfied desire – in the game of the satisfied and unsatisfied desire, hindered in its free realization – but *anguish* of being. Desperation in front of the not-being-so and of the not-being-able-to-be-again. The anguish of life, the 'anguish of death' – without representation of death. 'I fail' in front of hunger."[150] Then, the *other* who is between my hunger and my food for the satisfaction of his hunger becomes my *mortal enemy*: "The others and the struggle with others – in the threats of life: 'struggle for life and death'. Struggle with others for one's own being – to determine who dies of hunger for lack of nutrition – which becomes defense; my unconditioned will (for my 'being') in conflict with the other's will: I direct myself against him in his unconditioned will, against him with unconditioned hatred. The other is my mortal enemy."[151]

The mortal struggle with the other ends in the evolution of the hunt for food in a shared and productive *praxis*. In the immediacy of need I recognize otherness in the possible sharing of his *praxis* with mine for the satisfaction of the common poverty.[152] Being thus becomes reshaped and concretely elaborated in the way it better meets need:[153] the *humanization of the world* proceeds constantly within "nature's" already real being in view of the satisfaction of needs which are first immediate and then mediate.[154] Thus, it becomes possible to pose the tasks of *praxis* which, from the immediate interest of hunger, come to the solution of the periodicity of need through the

---

his analyses in this area, besides being highly fragmentary, do not seem to go beyond certain vague suggestions. Yet, for those who think that there are good reasons today to re-examine the Husserlian discourse, they raise interesting points. Cf. Enzo Paci, "Nuove Ricerche Fenomenologiche", *op.cit.*, which re-examines the phenomenology of needs and poses problems that now belong to a new history of phenomenology.

149. Manuscript A-V-5, p. 169.

150. Manuscript A-V-7, p. 78; this manuscript is 180 pages long and was written between 1920 and 1932.

151. *Ibid.*

152. Cf. Manuscript A-V-5, pp. 176-177. For the theme of identification in *praxis*, see Manuscript A-V-6, p. 20.

153. Cf. Manuscript A-V-5, pp. 161-162.

154. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

constitution of the *everyday* permanence,[155] of *useful means*[156] and goods. Yet, along the lines here barely and doubtfully outlined of a phenomenology of need and of *praxis*, we must also consider the failure of what motivates permanence. "Wealth" can become the end in itself of *accumulation (Ansammlung, Vermehrung)*: to always accumulate more and more money like accumulating more and more stamps,[157] and to gain more and more power as a good and an enjoyment which finds its meaning and end only in the *always more:* "Power is always more power, and over always broader human groups. Certainly, individual domination and control is an enjoyment, but a permanent good is to have power, to have the individual as a slave (here, without having utility in mind): to dominate a community, a group, to have a constant mastery over that and eventually to constantly extend one's domain of mastery *ad infinitum*."[158]

The I's original practicality comprehensively defines existence (*Existenz*) as life and history: the subject existing in its constant present[159] is first of all an *I-can*. It is always alive in the opening of the possible and in being able to realize the project of my living, I now live in the *hope (Hoffnung)* of continuing on living and in the *care (Sorge)* turned to resolving the *mode* of the projected possibility: "Every life in hope is life in *care*, and vice versa, if *care* of existence concerns the *how* and not the *what* of existence."[160] The threat is originally turned to the I-can: normal life is always threatened in the process of its multiple projects or even in its own being able to be again. Death is the limit of the negativity of life because it means the total failure of the possible, indifference to care and the darkening of hope. In the face of mortal threat, in the absolute no longer being able to, there is the *anguish for existence (Angst um die Existenz).* But the negativity of life is present in every determined desperation of the possible. Above all, it is present every time that man is deprived of the *work* which is properly his own: his *praxis*.[161]

Husserl questions the life of stolen labor by using two examples: the life of the "beggar", and that of the "prisoner". The beggar lives by begging, in total subordination to someone else's work. He is, or he may become, a "professional" beggar, a "sponger", thus constituting for himself a domain of *care* and of *hope*: a possibility of life. But it may also be that he cannot find work, "as during our periods of unemployment". He is still "alive": but how can his life be called a "life"?[162]

The "prisoner" maintains himself in "positivity" if he can hope to gain his freedom and to reconstruct his life through his work. Let us instead suppose that

155. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
156. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
157. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
158. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
159. It needs to be stressed that the fundamental theme of the *present* coincides with that of *praxis*.
160. Manuscript E-III-6, p. 2; this manuscript is 16 pages long and was written in May-June 1933.
161. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this is precluded from him and that he is condemned for life: "If 'as punishment' he cannot do anything in a solitary cell, or if he is forced to an activity which is meaningless for him, e.g., such as unravelling wool and similar activities, without him deriving from it any real possibility, isn't such an imprisoned life inhuman and radically de-humanizing?"[163] The beggar and the prisoner are two sides of the same coin: deprived of their own possibility, and yet in the positivity of life, they are men in a state of de-humanization: they are living in death. If the unemployed ends up by resolving his own life begging, the prisoner, robbed of the sense of free ownership of his work, cannot but *beg* his possibility of life by *inventing a game*: "If in such a situation man invents games which keep him busy, and if he voluntarily finds himself in them, so as to 'maintain himself' for them and always again for them: would this be a human life? Isn't this, so to say, a way of begging satisfaction out of life, instead of arriving at a truly human mode of being?"[164]

By publicizing these last fragments, we believe we are able to conclude this exposition: it has simply attempted to shed light on the horizon of problems disclosed by the phenomenological position of the theme of subjective otherness. At any rate, it is clear that the path we have followed remains, in its possible ramifications and in its final meaning, completely open and unfinished.

163. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
164. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

The Philosophical Forum

VOLUME III **SPRING 1972** **No. 3**

GYORGY MARKUS: About Georg Lukács
GEORG LUKACS: On the Phenomenology of the Creative Mode
ERNST FISCHER: Georg Lukács and the Theory of Reflection
ADAM SCHAFF: The Consciousness of a Class and Class Consciousness
AGNES HELLER: Von Der Armut am Geiste: A Dialogue by the Young Lukács
GEORG LUKACS: On Poverty of Spirit: A Conversation and a Letter
MIKLOS ALMASI: The Rehabilitation of Subjectivity
ANDREW ARATO: Notes on History and Class Consciousness
PAUL BREINES: Lukacs, Marxism and Revolution: 1885-1918
ANDREW FEENBERG: Lukács and the Critique of "Orthodox" Marxism
WILLIS H. TRUITT: Ideology, Expression and Mediation in Marx, Raphael and Lukács
LEE BAXANDALL: Georg Lukács and the Dangling Man

$1.00 a year for institutional subscribers; $8.00 a year for individual subscribers; $5.00 a year for student subscribers, payable to:

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FORUM
Department of Philosophy
Boston University
232 Bay State Road
Boston, Mass. 02215.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WILLIAM BURROUGHS AND THE INVISIBLE GENERATION

by

Maxy Beml

Wherever words and acts coincide with the Truth, goose pimples sprout on the brains of reformers like scaling dandruff on a withered scalp. Nothing disturbs the arcane guardians of Ideology and Culture more than an eruption of subjective desire that takes itself for reality, and reality for itself. For those who have made compromise the means to survival and death, sublimation is a *necessity*. Their means to understanding inevitably finds its basis in suppression, even in the face of revolutions that cannot be suppressed! The professors and the other pimps of "culture" digging around in the subterranean currents applaud the obscurity that awaits their interpretation. This is why the work of William Burroughs escapes the therapists and the neo-stalinist militants. The priests of vying ideologies can only recognize that his work fits few categories upon which their existence is based. Even the perceptive see only vestiges of science fiction, eccentricity, desperation, or "non-novels". As Burroughs says, "there are degrees of lying collaboration and cowardice." The atrophying spectre of philosophy propping itself up with the illusions of transcendental propositions and therapeutic matrices merges with the tertiary industry of high culture: the critic who gives life to nothingness. The raised life of the Super Alien has an ally in the Subliminal Drain-Off of those who accept their malaise as a thin crust covered with the toe-jam of survival as well as the crotch-rot movement of militants, priests, and martyrs.

Where Burroughs' investigations perforate the proud flesh of accumulated alienation, they undermine the Drain-Off along with the Drain–O: the cut-culture of Mainline Marks scrambling for gimmicks, replicas, repros, synthetics, boofants, and the security of stasis-time. Burroughs irritates the oil of humanism and the catfish of morality, neither of which are capable of turning aside his blade from the pimple of culture that they guard. Burroughs' susceptibility to being understood by non-jargon minds lances the prophylactic and lets out the pus. He isn't humorous. Or a writer. The Laughter he produces separates subjectivity from the Alien. An attack on the layers of addiction congealed around the spine of Super Alien control and confidence in the inauthentic. Recognizing the game is rigged only results in cynicism, the preconscious paralysis of Anti-Life forces and the pyramids they control. Burroughs is to calcified theory as detergent is to an oil slick: what is emulsified doesn't disappear, it just doesn't hang together anymore.

I.

> "Junk is the ideal product . . . the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy . . . . The junk merchant does not sell his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies his client. He pays his staff in junk." — *Naked Lunch*, vii.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Junk, the antithesis of subjectivity, is also the counterweight that tumors the gestures of daily life – the concrete hole that welcomes suckers into tomorrow. Addiction to the Familiar displaces the critique of false consciousness with the concrete totality of commodity existence. The rationality of fetishized existence is the rationality of the means to Power whose end paces between the successes of Domination and the reversals of Self-Mutilation. In-between the success in which progress loses its meaning, and the meaninglessness encountered by men trapped by stress and stasis, emerges the negative synthesis: chaos. Chaos and derangement are more integral to the system of integration than the goals of the system itself. And it is from inside this exploding perspective that Burroughs speaks.

Naked Lunch. Dead Fingers Talk. Nova Express. The Ticket That Exploded. Burroughs narrates a future that exists within the *gases* of the present. If his works appear as science fiction to some, it is precisely because they are based on the kernel fetishism seeks to lose itself in: the paradigm of the commodity, Total Need.

"You notice we don't have as much time as people say 100 yrs. ago? Take your clothes to the laundry/write a letter/pick up your mail at American Express and the day is gone – " (*Nova Express*, 70). Routine and dead time are the creations of external power and the necessity of frustration. Inside of this universe going through the motions of daily life is haunted by the contraction of Time that is the correlate of consumption and frozen consciousness. Burroughs' collage of the Familiar shatters the synopses of irreversibility that guide it.

Burroughs reads from the inside out, because he *is* the Inside/Out. The compelling democracy of the commodity that transmits mystification with the immediacy of electronics and the systematic direction of science, flow through appearances more hidden than the rebus of myth. Another language, the metallic language of Things, gets you there on time – as it incorporates your dreams. The will to Power appears as the deformed master of the will to create. Jobs. Discipline. Solving the Puzzles of Bureaucracies. Plus a constant blanket of Images and Commodities woven into a universe of synthetic desires and their dissatisfying fulfillment.

The recently discovered Philippine tribe, called the Tasadays,[1] didn't know what white sugar was. This is only interesting in light of the fact that this was the first substance the representatives of "civilization" had to offer them. "You guys got no cavities? Positively uncivilized. Here, try some of this." Heroin, as Burroughs demonstrates, is merely the spectacle of addiction within the addiction of the Spectacle: the glittering smog of capitalist/commodity utopia. In the Pyramid of Junk, heroin degrades by invoking the Total Need that the enriched poverty of this society lusts and drools over. In the system of a reality composed of false needs, the University of Needy Hosts and Willing Parasites, heroin has more in common with sugar than its color: "No habits? Here, try some of this!"

II.

FLASH!!!

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (UPI) – In American Samoa, where television

1. Tasadays: A Stone Age tribe living in the rain forests of the southern Philippines. Their recent discovery has been celebrated as a meeting between Civilization and Uncivilized. They may be the first to know what it means to taste Civilization.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has been used as the primary method of education for nearly a decade, the people have been strongly influenced by the shows offered as entertainment . . . *Walt Disney Presents* has had a marked influence. Children have been named Mickey Mouse, and the high school students occasionally sign their lesson sheets merely 'The Swamp Fox' or 'King of the Wild Frontier'." ("TV Enlivens Life-style of American Samoans" – *Los Angeles Times*, 4/17/72).

In recent TV news clips from Viet Nam the horizon stretches out in a flat arc reminiscent of the stark barrens of the moon.[2] The difference is that one scene was created by Americans and the other used as a spectacular movie Set. There is a connection here between sanitized brutality and senselessness masquerading as scientific research. In Viet Nam we see the devastating Truth of Alien-Science: the end result of the historic project of dominating and controlling Nature locked hand in hand with the project to make the world safe for Exploitation and Addiction. In Viet Nam, jungle and darkness are as much the American enemy as the population. Nature is the ally of the Enemy and shares their fate: death or domination. And what awaits those who submit? Mickey Mouse. Refined sugar. The King of the Wild Frontier. The Job?

Where the Familiar is forced onto terrain it doesn't yet dominate, we are able to recognize and identify the ingredients that make up the recipe of Junk Consciousness. Hitting golf balls on the Moon; Playboy[3] looks catching on in Viet Nam; Mickey Mouse on Samoa American tourists – these isolated scars condense a bizarre unity of domination and junk. Slip the mask on America and the Eternity that the Normal takes for granted suddenly becomes a diseased and total abcess. In America the Familiar is the Super-Alien. Behind the Need for Absolute Power thrives the steaming hive of Junk that reinforces its own insect cravings by serving them up to everyone intraveneously. This Pyramid of Junk feeds on intensifying the market for False Need, in the name of necessity and hunger: "(it is no accident that junk higher-ups are always fat and the addict in the street is always thin) right up to the top or tops since there are many junk pyramids feeding on peoples of the world and all built on the basic principles of monopoly: (1) Never give anything away for nothing. (2) Never give more than you have to give. (3) Always take everything back if you possibly can." (*Naked Lunch*, vi.)

The incubator of the Monopoly Virus stimulates democratic forms of False Need – democratic Addiction fixated on the mystifying Need to Buy – in America the Algebra of Need is Total Need.

Here the Pushers are also Addicts – addicted to refined Power, pure Power, and Things. One side of Burroughs' Truth is this: that the Control Addict must create and preserve a Universe sympathetic to his Needs. And since his Needs tend toward becoming Total, his Universe must necessarily tend toward an inescapable Totality. And because the consciousness of this Super-Alien Universe accepts as Familiar (i.e., Good and Logical) the hierarchy of Monopoly, his domination is also necessarily Anti-Life Time: the Time of mere Survival. The problem of the Super-Alien Survivor can only be solved by creating an Alien Universe as his home. Like lobotomized Drones the Super-Alien performs and obeys by mimicking the language and gestures of those around him. As Goebbels, an archaic but indicative forerunner once said, "When I hear the word

---

2. See "The Cratering of Indochina", in *Scientific American*, May 1972.
3. NOTE: Front Page, *Los Angeles Times*. Daily news. Surgery clinics in Vietnam. "Playboy-Style Looks Catch On In Vietnam". Saigon: "The long American presence in South Vietnam has changed not only the face of the nation, but the faces and even the bodies of a growing number of the South Vietnamese people as well."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Culture, there I pull my gun." Guns are obsolete, however, where therapy is provided by purchase, and Culture is nothing more than a neutralizing aspirin for intellect: an ointment for mental itch.

III.

> "The realization that something as familiar to you as the movement of your intestines the sound of your breathing the beating of your heart is also alien and hostile does make one feel a bit insecure at first." – *Ticket That Exploded*, 50.

In Burroughs' method of Seeing Clearly, clarity presupposes a decisive Negativity: cutting-up The Word. "The word is now a virus." Burroughs insists that the Word is the carrier of alien substance that separates the organism from contact with alternative possibilities of organization, other states of actual being, other Time and other Space. Burroughs' altered state of consciousness reflects on what has already been altered and why: the language of Addiction is not only composed of meaningless words, but positively promotes the compulsive repetition of jargon: its automization. Like repressed jack-in-the-boxes, jingles and advertising formulae whistle through our brain carrying with them the wind of Virus Time. Inside the automated greenhouse the plants are Things and the parasites with the metallic ring are people. Their communications are manipulation and the means to manipulation: a democratized disease genetically inserted into the collective history. Today the Word is Control. Freud was wrong. Dreams that are interpreted are annihilated. Burroughs rejects this need to interpret. Interpret for whom? For what? Analysis is interminable because therapy adjusts the organism to its disease, to the source of the disorder. The insoluble problem of therapy ultimately has recourse to the "discontents" of Civilization for explanation. Its real failure, however, is in reinforcing the "discontent" by making the Timeless dimension of the dream susceptible to control: exposing imagination to the Short-Time hustle. "Modern man has lost the option of silence," Burroughs says. Indeed, the compulsion to talk doesn't cease. Men's dreams have become internalized replicas of everyday living. The sub-vocal voice never ceases speaking to you. In terms of Power, this voice of meaninglessness mobilizes your spirit into accepting its fate – the moment of collected boredom and Dead-time, and the moment of Nagasaki: "masturbating afternoons . . . The Gods of Time/Money/Junk . . . Nova. Nova. Nova."

In the Cut-Up, disrespect for this "logic" genetically built into our collective domination and alien self-regulation is exposed as Force and Farce. Burroughs' explorations make use of various ways of re-arranging the pre-arranged and pre-recorded codes that are normalized in childhood and kept in place by the force of role-playing and collective jealousy/competition. Alteration of this deeply sedimented consciousness has a variety of limits and levels of tolerance. For example, the use of drugs may radically change Time/Space relations, without necessarily altering the deeper state of Addiction. Very powerful hallucinogens, such as LSD, often have traumatic withdrawal effects: the elimination of the Control-Code and its companion Virus Time in one explosive rush can cause the subject to experience fear without necessarily challenging the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

basic mode of existence: Burroughs isn't interested in trips. The ability of drugs to become part of the fetishistic rhythm of life today is obvious: super-stars, stereos, new styles in clothes and sex are *not* counter to the values of the cybernetic welfare state. By using a tape recorder, however, it is possible to begin consciously playing with the language of domination imbedded inside of you. The subvocal speech system precludes the free play of imagination. This chatter is the congealed fetish of randomized mental space. The tape recorder makes this sub-vocal network of seemingly automatic word formulae accessible to re-arrangement. Record anything. Then re-arrange. Cut-in random sounds. Play back. You will begin to find that these seemingly random arrangements have a logic. You will begin to hear what you never heard before. You will begin to retake control over your own energy. You will see and hear the Virus of Command, the Mark Within. But there is also an element of transcendence here which includes the negative as part of its Truth: new words, words not in the original text but which in many cases are relevant to the original, "*as if the words themselves had been interrogated and forced to reveal their hidden meanings.*" – *Ticket That Exploded*, 206.

Burroughs' unlocked vision burns from the inside out. From inside the basic unit of Control, the Captive Words: fetish bearing carriers of atrophied consciousness. For the Super-Alien, these words are saturated with control, reassurance, familiarity. Cutting-up these association lines tends to illuminate the false necessity locked inside. A hole poked in the hermetically sealed Roles and Routines becomes a periscope peering into a dead vacuum. Recognition of the alien inside of yourself leads to the discovery that it receives its legitimacy through the mutual infamy of everyone participating. The re-arranged control code comes out in a giggle: the uncontrollable Laugh of liberated spontaneity, which is also the accumulated horror of living with the Alien as the Familiar. "So the image past molds your future imposing repetition as the past accumulates and all actions are pre-recorded and doped out and there is no life left in the present sucked dry by a walking corpse muttering through empty court-yards under the film skys . . . " – *Ticket That Exploded*, 189.

We have all noticed those people attracted to plate glass windows, transported by their own reflections in the glass. Caught by their own glance, they are compelled to see themselves the way Others see them. A perpetual rhythm etched into the hardened surfaces of the urbanized world, reflecting the Image Crisis that affects all of those who must define themselves in relation to the Super-Alien Other. On all sides these mirrors beckon and insist. The outcome of this constant tendency toward inversion breaks out in a democracy of mimicry, whose authority, like the billboard, derives from its immobilizing presence. It cannot be avoided. It is arrogant in its assault. And we are assaulted constantly from all sides, without respite or nuance. A jagged, broken, continuous bombardment of frigid stares, frozen formulae, and richocheting gadgets. A juxtaposition of fragments, each equally sharp, each equally dulling and compelling. A serial of minced moments coordinated and regulated from outside. A composition of routine and random concussions, the memory of a civilization seeking amnesia. "Into the Interior: a vast subdivision, antennae of television to the meaningless sky. In lifeproof houses they hover over the young, sop up a little of what they shut out. Only the young bring anything in, and they are not young very long." – *Naked Lunch*, 11.

This "U.S. drag" urges senility as the mark of maturity. A totalizing senility hiding at the basis of common-sense, partitioning spontaneity from life, and pushing its Ugly Spirit to ever new levels of intensity and inescapable necessity. Success and senility go together. Mr. Bradley, Mr. Martin.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

All marks. A carnivorous carnival of marks and rubes, snarling and barking at each other, fighting over the miserable crumbs thrown them from every side. "Familiar will be the end product? . . . In The American Cemetery." – *Nova Express*, 74. Even the con artist gets conned. The gangsters are moralists. Businessmen gangsters. The worker pays in insecurity and fear. The professor in ulcers and paranoia. The playboy in premature ejaculation. The housewife in petty grace. Insect lust peels the banana of meagre satisfactions with the claws of Super-Alien electricity. The future doesn't exist here: it has become nothing more than the repetition of Present Time on a more intensified and therefore more stupefying basis. Leisure Time? It's loaded. Cancerous. A parking lot full of camper trailers in the Yosemite. Pre-determined in the monotonous spectacle of professional sports. Ridiculous on the beaches of L.A. and Miami. There is a connection between fat and smog. The freeways cannot stop being built. The war in Viet Nam has nothing to do with the "will of the people". "Too many Americans dying? Let's sanitize the war." American bombers are the Auschwitz of purity. America improves on the mistakes of the Nazi's. Napalm – instant, self-destructing Ovens for our victims. The poetry of cybernetic Death Dwarfs whose impotence has the aroma of burning flesh. Every night. Naked Lunch. TV Dinner. It's open for all to see. Synchronized, metallic, and inevitable, like the traffic jam you have for breakfast. If Burroughs teaches you how to decipher the code, it is necessary precisely because the code is everybody's baby. The machine lives in the particles and atoms it feeds upon. Burroughs' negative feedback shorts the mainline circuits. A Science of Discontent probing the vast sunset of capitalist utopia. A desperate buboe, given to breaking out all over the earth. Spreading its "Freeland" philosophy of cleanliness and dullness along with the cultured brutality of the urban malaria it creates: an epidemic of neon, prostitution, pollution, and fear. In the face of this, Burroughs' message is also the manifesto of retaliation: "THIS IS WAR TO EXTERMINATION. FIGHT CELL BY CELL THROUGH BODIES AND MIND SCREENS OF THE EARTH. SOULS ROTTEN FROM THE ORGASM DRUG, FLESH SHUDDERING FROM THE OVENS, PRISONERS OF THE EARTH COME OUT. STORM THE STUDIOS – " – *Nova Express*, 56.

Burroughs' plan to retake the Reality Studios calls for absolute transformation. Through total exposure comes total resistence and effective action. Playing with Reality assaults the Studio in its most vulnerable spot: the Marks on the street. Wise up the Marks. The weak link in the junk equation. "Wise up all the marks everywhere. Show them the rigged wheel of Life-Time-Fortune. Storm The Reality Studio. And retake the universe." – *Nova Express*, 56. Positive action is completely immersed in negation: but Burroughs isn't just talking about fucking things up. "Take Studio. Take Board Books. Take Death Dwarfs. Towers, Open Fire." – *Dead Fingers Talk*, 49.

In the world of the Super-Alien Burroughs is the termite excavating the insides of a gutless world. (What if the Viet Cong had an Air Force?) Behind the flow of images that command with sugar and sex comes the needs of pure Power: the Control-Addicts of Destruction. The rulers of America's triumph: the synthesizers of capitalism's utopia. Liberated promiscuity, encounter groups, alcohol, hollywood and militarism all promote the defects of isolation. Outside of the realm of Pure Power, passive participation and the imitation of Power are all that are rewarded. The lubrication that voyeurism provides has become a necessary item of everyday life: the come-on and the put-on – all part of the ultimate paranoid flash Put-Down. Slums and massage parlor, exterminators and easy-livers, special forces and computer sex. In Burroughs the mix is shovelled around like shit in a cement mixer – the images of our world rolling around

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

until nothing is left unstuck. The total picture takes shape only by its indiscriminate reshaping. Truth comes to light. Clarity is indeed "shifting word lines", destroying association locks, making the ordinary, the incubus of the Familiar, into the extra-ordinary.

Suddenly you are alone. In a room without air. A Vacuum that both consumes and nourishes. For years now the Vacuum has given you survival. You can't remember any other way. Vague memories of timeless moments of childhood are passed away. Gone forever. "That's the Way it Is", you mumble while standing in line again in the supermarket. Someone slips an oxygen mask over your face. You struggle. In one grotesque polyp, the accumulated tumor of Dead-Time, Stunted Desires, and Fear of Authority collapse on the floor, the desk, the sheets. The Laughter falls from your spine. You are filled with the awful terror of seeing the entire Vacuum Shithouse as mutilating and hysterical. And you realize that you've been Short-Timed and only have Minutes-To-Go. The message of total resistence on short wave of the world. "... There is no supercession outside of total revolution."

EARLY "MARXIST" CRITIQUES OF REICH

by

Constantin Sinelnikov

The views of the Russian and German communist critics opposed to Reich from 1929 to 1933 may be summed up in a theoretical criticism of his article "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis" and in a political criticism of his theory of the necessity of proletarian sexual politics as a "diversion from class struggle".

Reich began his career as a psychoanalist in Vienna and took an active part in the psychoanalytic clinic as soon as it opened in 1922. There he experienced the connections between neurosis and peoples' material and sexual life conditions, which were much more obvious in the lower classes than in private patients; and became convinced that one had to leave individual therapy for prophylaxy, that is, a practical struggle against the conditions of sexual misery carried out in the social and ideological field. To that end, in 1929 he founded six sex guidance clinics. His first encounter with Marxism was in 1927, with the riots of July in Vienna, and his subsequent reading of some classical Marxist works. His publications before 1929 are technical works in psychoanalysis: a few articles and two books (*The Impulsive Character,* 1925, and *The Function of the Orgasm,*[1] 1927). In 1929, in the communist journal *Under the Banner of Marxism* he published the well-known article on "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis". In the Soviet Union, some communists such as Varjas and Friedmann had said that psychoanalysis could tackle certain tasks within the framework of dialectical materialism. But this point of view was opposed by the official representatives of Marxist philosophy, especially Deborin, the defender of the philosophical conception of materialism established by Lenin in

1. This latter book is not in English. The book entitled *The Discovery of the Orgone. I. The Function of the Orgasm* is another book by Reich written around 1939.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Materialism and Empiriocriticism.[2] Reich's article answers the criticism of Jurinetz and Deborin,[3] according to whom psychoanalysis was (1) a by-product of the decaying bourgeoisie and (2) an "idealistic" discipline. The editors of the journal had Reich's article followed by a refutation by Ischaia Sapir, "Freudism, Sociology, Psychology", an article that may be considered as representing the official communist standpoint at that time on psychoanalysis and on Reich in particular (the 1935 article on "Freudianism" in the large *Soviet Encyclopedia* [1st edition, vol. 59] is explicitly based on Sapir's article). In September, 1929, some time after the publication of these articles, Reich delivered a lecture at the Communist Academy on "Psychoanalysis as a Natural Science" followed by a debate with Sapir, Salkind, and others, where, of course, everyone defended their own positions. In addition to this theoretical criticism, Reich had to face the charge of "diversion from class struggle" when in 1930 he created an Association for Proletarian Sexual Politics (Sexpol) in Berlin sponsored by the German Communist Party. We can find allusions and responses to this accusation throughout his main works: *The Sexual Struggle of Youth, The Sexual Revolution, The Mass Psychology of Fascism,* and *What Is Class Consciousness?*.

It must be stressed that the Russian communists criticized Reich exclusively on the basis of "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis", which partly accounts for the low standard of their criticism. They had not read Reich's earlier writings, and thus ignored the psychoanalytic background of the article and, above all, Reich's more empirical works which could have given more credibility to the article: "Sexual Maturity, Continence, Marital Morality" (1930, included in *The Sexual Revolution,* chs. II to VI), "The Intrusion of Sexual Morals" (1932), and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933) were not yet published. But by 1933 Reich's ideas were considered entirely "reactionary", when in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism,* he accounted for the rise and success of Nazism in a way different from the Komintern's account. The criticism of "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis" is based in the first place upon the general criticism of psychoanalysis as summarized in the article on "Freudianism" in the *Soviet Encyclopedia*: "Freud's psychology shows the following characteristics: 1) it is ultra-individualistic. Freud does not explain individual behavior by the struggles and trends of the collectivity, but, inversely, he explains social life by the mechanical summation of individual behaviors. 2) Freud does not understand the social conditions of human behavior. The influence of surroundings, according to Freud, is limited to the action of the reality-principle in the field of consciousness. But since consciousness, according to him, plays a minor part in the individual psyche, the influence of surroundings is reduced to nearly nothing. 3) Human behavior, according to Freud, is subjected to unconscious sexual drives inherited from childhood. 4) Freud in fact explains the behavior of the healthy man by the neuropath's behavior. 5) Freud's biologism leads him to the subjective idealism: he denies the influence of surroundings, explains man's behavior solely by his internal psychic and biological drives, and explains the whole of social life by the behavior of single individuals. Moreover, Freud says that the libido has a physiological basis, but in fact studies it only as a psychic phenomenon. Thus, the psychoanalytic method does not even account for the behavior of individuals in all its complexity. Nevertheless, some Freudians pretend to explain the whole social

2. For a criticism of Lenin's concept of materialism, which implies a regression to the vulgar materialism fought by Marx, see Anton Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher* (New Essays, New York, 1948).
3. Articles in *Under the Banner of Marxism.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phenomenon on the basis of psychoanalysis. . . . The fact that Freud founded his theory on physiological demands gave Freudianism a materialistic outlook and was taken as a pretext by some authors for considering it as a materialistic discipline. . . In this way, W. Reich, speaking of agriculture, says that it aims mainly at producing means of support. But at the same time, he asserts that agriculture also has a symbolic meaning – an incest with the mother (the earth, nutrient mother). . . . Freudianism has nothing in common with Marxism. The psychology of Freudism is ultra-individualistic in its content and in its method. . . . "

The criticism of Reich proper consists in dismissing his attempt to distinguish psychoanalysis as an empirical and scientific psychology from the "illegitimate" applications of psychoanalysis in which it becomes an idealistic *Weltanschauung* (see "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis", first pages). Reich asserts that (1) Psychoanalysis stands as an individualistic psychology with no sociological aims, and he dismisses the applications of psychoanalysis grounded on such aims, which, after *Totem and Taboo,* could be found in the works of Kolnai, de Man, Lafargue, etc. (2) As individualistic psychology, psychoanalysis deals with the expressions of social relations and ideology "within the minds of men" (Freud's second topography – id, ego, superego – clearly refers to interindividual relations).

The communists reject both assertions: (1) Whatever Reich may say, psychoanalysis has a sociological aim. Starting from some simplified formulas of Reich (sexual energy becoming work power through sublimation, agriculture as incest, etc.), Sapir sought to demonstrate that Reich is inconsistent in claiming to limit psychoanalysis to individual psychology. Reich claims to gain from psychoanalysis some knowledge about the formation of ideologies, whereas, says Sapir, any social psychology must be deduced from a study of the social centers of ideological influence resulting from class struggle. Besides, when Reich happens to say something correct about social influences on the individual psyche, psychoanalytic theory has no part in it. For instance, Reich is correct in saying that "human predispositions and needs, which are empty forms likely to receive social contents, undergo a (social) elaboration in the relations with the father, the mother, the teachers, and only then gain their final form and content"; but he contradicts this correct appraisal of social factors when he speaks of "aesthetics based upon anal eroticism" and asserts that "the surgeon sublimates his sadism, the gynecologist his infantile visual and tactile pleasure", even though he specifies that "it's primarily in his economic status that an individual will sublimate his sadism as a butcher, a surgeon, or a policeman." At any rate, it remains that Reich has given a part to sexual instinct in the genesis of art, work, choice of profession, etc.[4] (2) Reich asserted that "psychoanalysis cannot conceive of the child other than within society; it exists for psychoanalysis solely as a socialized being. . . . Psychoanalysis derives the whole of morals from educative influences". But according to Sapir, psychoanalysis has no part in enunciating the social influences on the child. Besides, as we have seen, Reich himself spoke of the part played by instincts in professional and social life, and said that "the intensity of needs (subdued to somatic conditions), like the quantitative differences in development, are determined by the sexual apparatus".[5] Here again appears the "biologism" so characteristic of Freudian-

4. *La Crise Sexuelle*, p. 215; pp. 238-239. We quote from a French book entitled *La Crise Sexuelle* (Editions Sociales Internationales, 1934), which in fact contained Reich's "Sexual Maturity, Continence, Marital Morality", "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis", and Sapir's "Freudianism, Sociology, Psychology".
5. *La Crise Sexuelle*, pp. 234, 239.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ism. Far from explaining the individual psyche by social life, psychoanalysis explains it from biology (the sexual instincts), which fits with its overvaluation of unconscious factors in the individual psyche. In 1934, the French edition of "Sexual Maturity, Continence, Marital Morality" warns in a preface: "Reich does not consider the sexual crisis primarily as a result of the conflict between declining capitalism and the new social relations, the new proletarian morality, but as the result of the conflict between the natural, eternal sexual needs and capitalist social regulation. Here we can see the false 'biologistic' concept of which Sapir speaks."[6] In short, both because psychoanalysis is an individualistic psychology, and because it is based on the "biological", Reich fails to save psychoanalysis from the unsoundnesses of Freudianism.

Reich's answer to this criticism is of course mostly implied in the theses already expressed in his article. Thus he answers during the debate in Moscow: "... One thing is important here: do we assume the standpoint that social life determines ideology, and not inversely? I think I showed here that psychoanalysis holds precisely to this standpoint. Besides, I am accused of assuming that arts and sciences are offsprings of the unconscious. I maintain that only individual predispositions are produced by drives which have already undergone social influence. It is quite clear that the content of science and art is determined by the social mode of life.... I must categorically answer comrade Salkind regarding one point of his account. He supposes that by a diplomatic maneuver I did not speak here of psychoanalysis as a *Weltanschauung*. Excuse me, comrade Salkind, but I will hold you to the use of diplomatic maneuvering. In my paper I spoke definitely and clearly of psychoanalysis as a science, and I delimited it from a *Weltanschauung*.... One might think that you reject psychoanalysis in general, even as a science. That would be definitely unmarxist. Since I reject Freudianism in your sense, I am somewhat compelled to resort to a diplomatic maneuver to plead for psychoanalysis. Clinical facts plead for themselves. Those who listened to my paper without prejudice cannot pretend that I introduce psychoanalysis into sociology. Psychoanalists criticize me because I refute certain illegitimate pretensions of psychoanalysis, and here I am accused of the opposite. Comrades, it is impossible to solve the questions regarding a science such as psychoanalysis in that way. One must enter into it with objectivity and in earnest.... Freudianism is indeed reactionary in an established sense. But psychoanalysis is not affected at all by that.... It is well known that technique and any new invention become reactionary in bourgeois countries. But you would not repudiate this technique for that reason.... The same is true for psychoanalysis. I do not at all understand the objection raised against my concept of psychoanalysis as dialectical materialism applied in the field of psychic life. Is not Marxism called upon to apply this method in all provinces of nature? Did not a harsh debate take place on that point between Deborin and Lukacs?... Regarding the struggle with illegitimate applications of psychoanalysis, it must be carried out not only because they contradict Marxism, but first of all because they contradict psychoanalysis."[7]

Reich obviously feels that his opposition is somewhat systematic. A prejudiced, nearly political, intention has been ascribed to him to introduce psychoanalysis into Marxism by a kind of theoretical and deductive synthesis. "Reich," Sapir says, "tries to drape psychoanalysis with a dialectical cloth."[8] He "draws plenty of deductions" from a letter in which Engels protests against the

6. *Ibid.*, p. xi. (Cf. Reich's answer in *The Sexual Revolution*, p. xxviii.)
7. *Estiestvoznanie i Marxism* (1929), 4, pp. 124-125.
8. *La Crise Sexuelle*, p. 193.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

idea that production and reproduction of real life is the only determining factor in ideologies.[9] Reich starts from psychoanalytic material and from the experience of certain social functions of sexual suppression, showing some consequences for understanding the formation and action of ideologies. Sapir, on the other hand, ascribed his own way of thought to Reich: that is, deducing from certain texts which allegedly represent achieved Marxism what a Marxist social psychology should be, and then examining whether psychoanalysis is or is not this Marxist psychology. Sapir asserts that "Marxism accords an important and well determined place to the psycho-social factor"; and quoting from Plekhanov's *Basic Questions of Marxism,* he says: "If we want to express briefly Marx and Engels' concept of the relation of the well-known 'base' to the equally well-known 'superstructure', we'll be led to analyze: (1) the state of productive forces; (2) the economic relations conditioned by these forces; (3) the socio-political system built upon a given economic 'base'; (4) the psychology of socialized man, determined partly directly by the economy and partly by the whole socio-political system built upon it; and (5) the various ideologies reflecting this psychology."[10] But the goal of a psychology is not psychology itself. However, Sapir further says that certain valuable results of psychoanalysis "should be incorporated into the more achieved system of the incipient Marxist psychology", without saying where this "incipient" psychology is to be found. In fact, Sapir cannot accept a social psychology which is not deduced from the class struggle. He says, for instance, that psychoanalysis is not entirely useless because "in such synthetic sciences such as Marxist sociology, the least bit can and must be used."[11] But a science, including Marx's Marxism, is analytic before being synthetic (which may not be the case for the concept of materialism according to Lenin or Deborin). Reich will continue to say that there was no scientific psychology before psychoanalysis (see, e.g., *Mass Psychology of Fascism,* p. 20).

Marxism in Russia had long since become the ideology merely of a party in power. For instance, Wulff, who for several years had been president of the Moscow Psychoanalytic Society, wrote in reply to Reich's account of his Moscow debate: "The official treatment of psychoanalysis is exactly the same as that of any other scientific discipline or theory of postwar times. This was the fate of relativity, phenomenology, Gestalt theory, modern psychology and philosophy, and even biology, etc. Lenin warned . . . against the dangers to communist revolution from the bourgeois science of Western Europe. . . . Any new thought, any idea, any new theoretical acquisition of science is accepted, but with anxious mistrust and suspicion: and one must carefully check to what extent it fits with the letter of Marxist-Leninist laws. . . . That psychoanalysis could not clear itself from guilt before this severe court of the party is not surprising."[12]

But even in Western countries, which enjoyed a freedom of thought unknown in Russia, this official criticism of Reich had some influence among communist party intellectuals. A lack of real knowledge of psychoanalysis, the difficulties of distinguishing between clinical facts, topographical interpretations, and wider philosophical interpretations, and above all, the attachment to simple ideas such as the "individualism" and "biologism" of psychoanalysis – ideas always more or less depending on a prejudice against any theory which did not start from

9. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 227, 212.
12. *Psychoanalytische Bewegung* (1930), pp. 70-75.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxist principles – led to an easy acceptance of the condemnation of Reich by many otherwise intelligent communist intellectuals (e.g., Georges Politzer in France). In Germany too Reich had to face simply but deeply rooted objections: but there the discussion was alive, and Reich found many adherents among youth movements and minor communist functionaries.

Reich often alludes in his book to the "deeply rooted idea" that sexual politics is a "diversion from the class struggle", which he had to face after founding the Sexpol movement with the short-lived agreement of the communist party. Of course, this idea is still alive: and it is hardly possible (for instance, in France) to hold a sex-political meeting without hearing about it from representatives of Leninist groups (Trotskyists or Maoists). This idea is more or less connected with a few arguments: (1) sex is a "private matter"; (2) sex politics and political work are contradictory since politics seeks to solve social problems and sex deals with individual needs; (3) even if there is some kind of sexual suppression, capitalism is above all a system of economic exploitation; thus for fundamental and strategic reasons, political propaganda and struggle must be oriented towards control of the means of production. It is not necessary to explain at length Reich's responses to these arguments, since the whole of his work is a general treatment of the subject. Let us recall the general trends: the first two arguments are merely borrowed from bourgeois morality, especially the idea of the contradiction between sex and work – and hence an ascetic concept of proletarian politics and of socialism in general. One cannot carry out a revolution within bourgeois politics (see *What Is Class Consciousness?*). Concerning the third objection, (a) sexual need is a meterial need that pervades 99% of art and literature; and it is the ruling need in childhood and adolescence. Moreover, (b) sexual repression has more political significance than ideology in the strict sense, because it is at the origin of the submissiveness, craving for authority, fear of violence, and fear of change anchored in the character structure, which allow the effectiveness of reactionary ideologies. Psychoanalysis gives insights into the fact that, thanks to sexual repression, these attitudes inhibit the acceptance of revolutionary ideologies which would fit the objective situation (*Sexual Revolution, Mass Psychology of Fascism,* ch. I). (c) It is thus necessary to struggle against sexual repression before the revolution: likewise, it is necessary at once to fight the influence of religion without waiting for the elimination of its economic basis (moreover, religious feeling is rooted in sexual suppression). It is necessary to undermine the basis of reactionary ideologies: "The core of the cultural politics of political reaction is the sexual question. It follows that the core of revolutionary cultural politics also must be the sexual question" (*Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 96). (d) Moreover, from a merely strategic point of view, the sexual question is more immediately felt than any other to unpolitical people, and is the best means to politicize them. It is the only available means for youngsters. (e) Reich specifies that he never thought of "substituting sexual politics for economic politics". The idea of sexual reforms independent of a change of the whole social system is precisely the error of bourgeois reformers. "The liberal, . . . the 'reformists', attempt, by introducing sexual reforms, to introduce a bit of socialism into the existing society. They try to reverse the process of development by having sexual reform take place before an alteration of the economic structure" (*Sexual Revolution,* p. 31). The principle of bourgeois reformers is moral and idealistic. But sexual misery has objective social causes, and the recent sexual liberation movements also have an objective social basis: the increasing economic independence of women and collectivization of working youth" (*Sexual Revolution,* p. 147; *Mass Psychology*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Fascism, pp. 162-163). Thus, revolutionary sexual politics must of necessity be integrated into the global struggle for socialism: Reich often insists on the fact that the only possibility in capitalism is constant politicization of the sexual question; a sexual revolution properly requires the mastery of the whole educational and informative apparatus of society which is not in the hands of the working class for the time being. For all these reasons, as Reich put it, sexual politics is "social dynamite".

From 1929 to 1933 (and even later), Reich considered himself a Marxist; he rejected the "Freudo-Marxist" qualification applied to him by Sapir. But he added that his theses on the structure and dynamics of ideology could not be understood without admitting some basic results of psychoanalysis. This remains true today; and it is important for that reason to consider Reich's distinction between a mere "bourgeois sexual revolt" and a true "proletarian sexual revolution" (*What Is Class Consciousness?*), the latter being effective only in the field of ideology.[13] Many sexual liberation movements are still of the first kind, preaching refusal of the rules of bourgeois morality and practicing the reversal of those rules without any significant change of their internalized mechanisms which rely on sexual repression (and also without a correct evaluation of the political significance of sexual suppression). Hence, they tend to overestimate the degree of sexual liberation already achieved (e.g., Reimut Reiche *Sexuality and Class Struggle*) and/or underestimate the psychic components of sexual oppression and hence the most significant element of it: sexual oppression in childhood and youth (as in Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*).

13. The American editions of Reich's works represent only part of his writings. Some important works such as *The Function of the Orgasm* (1927), *The Sexual Struggle of Youth*, "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis", "The Intrusion of Sexual Morals", and *What Is Class Consciousness?* were not republished by Reich in the U.S. [*What Is Class Consciousness?* appeared in English (tr. Anna Bostock) in *Liberation* October 1971. – Ed.]

The books he published in the U.S. are translations of earlier German books; and Reich suppressed the original Marxist vocabulary. Although the prefaces of *The Sexual Revolution* and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* allude to this change in terminology, they do not specify in what it consists. Let us briefly indicate this change: for instance, the phrases *bourgeois society* and *capitalism* are replaced by *authoritarian* and *conservative society*; the adjective *bourgeois* is regularly replaced by *authoritarian* or *conservative* (which sometimes leads to awkward phrases such as "conservative sexual reform" in *The Sexual Revolution*); *communists, communist party* and *communist youth* (even when used as proper names) become *workers, youth movement, youth organization; communist* or *proletarian* as adjectives often become *revolutionary* and even *life-affirmative*; *communism* and *socialism* become *work democracy*. The *class conscious worker* becomes only *conscious* or *responsible*; and *class-consciousness* becomes *social responsibility*.

In the books translated from German, besides these changes Reich added much new material dealing with work democracy and orgonomy: in *The Sexual Revolution* there was no addition; in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* chapters IX and X were added; and in *Character Analysis*, chapters XII and all of Part III were added. Reich's other books were published originally in the U.S.

By these changes, Reich's works lose much of their significance as works of political psychology because they lose coherence. They appear to some extent more ethical and less political, and thus the psycho-political side is less convincing. Some important themes such as the connections between sexual suppression and class society and the consequent connections of sexual politics with social revolution, which represent the main achievement of Reich's German works, are relegated to the background.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1971).

As a scientific and radical Marxist, Ollman challenges every pseudo-Marxist or anti-Marxist determinism. He easily rejects the technological interpretations of Marxian economics as elaborated by, e.g., Plamenatz, Acton, Carew-Hunt, etc., or by those economists who, like Joan Robinson and Joseph Schumpeter, do not understand the importance of the dialectical categories in Marxism. Ollman also criticizes the vulgar "orthodox", one-sided interpretations of historical and dialectical materialism. Nevertheless Ollman perhaps underestimates some differences between the old Engels and Marx: the actual question is not whether Marx approved wholly of Engels' *Anti-Duehring*. The real problems derive from Engels' questionable application of dialectics to nature or from his faulty definition of historical materialism (as shown by Korsch and Althusser). Also, Engels introduced a "naturalistic" and not "social" concept of economics.[1] Consequently, what is at issue is whether critical Marxism can bear intrusions of positivist method. Like Engels, Ollman speaks of social and economic "factors", perhaps not realizing that the term is inadequate. As Labriola put it, to divide Marxist theory into several factors is to create a "semidoctrine" which paves the way to charges of "one-dimensional" monism.[2] But this charge is only academic, since he *never* speaks of single factors isolated from the totality and immediately corrects his terminology by outlining his remarkable theory of "the internal relations" of a whole. Ollman distinguishes between the essence of a phenomenon and its appearance, which are however dialectically connected, because "the sense of 'relation' itself has been extended to cover what is related, so that either term may be taken to express both in their peculiar connection" (p. 27). Thus, Ollman saves Marxism as "empirical research" (p. 19), but avoids the rocks of "common sense" theories which mistake appearance for essence and effect for cause (or vice versa). Ollman rightly argues against Althusser that "Marx is erecting . . . as many structures of the whole as there are major units in his analysis" (p. 266, n. 41). The internal structural necessity of the totality cannot rigidly distinguish between "form" and "content". Ollman consequently rejects the "alienated" fact-value distinction or the theory of moral neutrality, since "on Marx's view, the real judgments which are made in any situation are a function of that situation and the particular individuals active in it" (pp. 47-48). The question of "human nature" is treated brilliantly: Ollman refuses (with Althusser) the concept of "socialist humanism",[3] criticizing the confused approach of Erich Fromm. On the other hand, speaking of "man's species character", he finds that the "specific content he [Marx] gives this latter category [is] doubly misleading: first, though it appears to apply to the species through its development, it does not – it only applies to man's activity in communism; secondly, as a description of man's activity in communism, it is woefully lacking in detail as we can see from Marx's other comments on this subject" (p. 112). In the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, Marx

1. See, for instance, Lucio Colletti, "Bernstein e il Marxismo della Seconda Internazionale", introduction to E. Bernstein, *I Presupposti del Socialismo e i Compiti della Social-democrazia*, Italian translation (Bari, Laterza, 1968), pp. xxvii-xxxv. For a criticism of Engels, see also Alfred Schmidt, *Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx* (Frankfurt am Main, 1962).
2. Antonio Labriola, "Del Materialismo Storico. Dilucidazione Preliminare", in *La Concezione Materialistica della Storia* (Bari, 1965), p. 88.
3. See Bertell Ollman, "Is There a Marxian Ethic?", *Science and Society*, Vol. XXXV, 2, 1971, p. 168, n. 22.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

breaks with his Feuerbachian "essentialism"; but the definition of man as "the totality of social relations" raises new epistemological and moral problems, one of which is the situation of men in a communist society. Ollman deals insistently with this point, arguing that Engels' definition of freedom is insufficient. "Where there is nothing that must be done, the last boundary to the exercise of man's human powers has been removed. Doing what he wants is no longer based on the condition of choosing correctly or perishing. The characteristics of work and non-work activity in communism are the same; only this condition differs" (p. 119). Ollman's position can be exemplified by several passages of the *Grundrisse*, to which Ollman himself attaches great importance, remarking that "[it] contains many pages which could have been lifted bodily from the *1844 Manuscripts*" (p. xiii). Analogous conclusions are reached in Roman Rosdolsky's *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxschen "Kapital"*, which is the most important study of the *Grundrisse* written so far.

We come now to the specific theme of alienation, a debated theory which is the point at stake in all interpretations which oppose the young Marx to the mature Marx, or, in István Mészáros' words, "oppose political economy to philosophy or philosophy to political economy."[4] The most striking example of this "halving" of Marx is a recent essay by Althusser, who reiterates his earlier formulations.[5] Althusser, who would like to eliminate all the damned "Hegelian" categories from Marxian philosophy, finds that Marx reached truly scientific conclusions free from Hegelianism only in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and in the *Randglossen* to Wagner's handbook. Ollman, of course, disposes of such absurdities, maintaining that there is an essential unity in the whole Marxian corpus. "Like all philosophy which concerns itself with organizing reality, with interpretation, the value of these theories [internal relations, human nature, alienation] must be measured by utility rather than truth (unless, of course, the two are equated). It is in this sense that philosophical systems are never exploded, but instead, like styles of clothing, simply go out of fashion . . . " (p. 232).

Ollman is much more convincing when he speaks of the internal validity of the "conceptual framework" of alienation. He states that the meaning of this term has "developed apace with the changes that have occurred in society" (p. 245), claiming at the same time that Marxian theory must account for "empirical evidence". Speaking of Marx's theoretical troubles with "ordinary factory workers", Ollman correctly tries to integrate Marxian analysis with modern mass psychology and sociology: actually, the question of why the workers can become reactionary or fail to become class conscious has never been answered by "orthodox" theoreticians.

Ollman points out another gap in Marxian analysis: "One power in particular which seems to have received less than its due in Marx's writings is the power of sex" (p. 240). That is true, but let us keep in mind the emphasis on *Triebe* in the *Grundrisse* and an ignored passage of the *German Ideology* erased in the manuscript and analyzed recently only by Reich, Fromm and Robert Kalivoda, where Marx speaks of the functions of desires in communist organization:[6] Marx observes that there is a fixity of certain desires and impulses, like the sexual ones, a remark which helps supporters of anthropological Marxism.

---

4. István Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London, 1970), p. 227.
5. Karl Marx, *Le Capital. Livre I* (Paris, 1969).
6. See *MEW*, Band 3, pp. 238-239.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ollman tries to balance subjective and objective aspects of Marxism, but his position is not "middle-of-the-road". His emphases on the definition of concepts and the epistemological role of the "internal relations" open new perspectives which save the epistemological standpoint from the impasses of structuralism. Moreover, his definition of alienation derives from a concrete economic analysis and not from abstract "existential" presuppositions. He goes beyond existing works on human nature and ethics (Venable, Selsam, Kamenka) by uniting a "critique of ideology" with a structural analysis. Last but not least, he definitively refutes conservative shortcomings expressed by students like Robert Tucker, who spoke of Marx's "moral escapism" because "not having located the 'egoistic need' within the personality of the alienated individual person, he [Marx] . . . failed to understand that it is only there, and by the individual's own moral effort, that the egoism can be undone and the revolutionary 'change of self' achieved."[7] On the contrary, according to Marx and to Ollman's precise comment, "one of the aims in the labor theory of value was to get us to see the capitalist as a useless and indeed harmful excrescence upon society, to whom offering compromises made no sense . . . " (p. 247).

Cristiano Camporesi

---

7. Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 240.

Sergio Bologna and Antonio Negri, editors, *Operai e Stato: Lotte Operaie e Riforma dello Stato Capitalistico tra Rivoluzione d'Ottobre e New Deal* (Feltrinelli Editore, Milan, 1972).

Operai e Stato is a collection of essays which grew out of a conference held at the University of Padua in 1967. With the exception of U.S. historian George Rawick, the authors are, or have been, connected with the Institute of Social and Political Sciences of that university, and are militants in the Italian extraparliamentary left. Several of these essays were widely circulated among militant groups and have served as a basis for discussion, especially during the outburst of student and worker struggles in 1968 and after.

One of the most important functions of these essays is to provide an example of class analysis in the context of advanced capitalist society where the mystificatory incrustations of bourgeois social science have had the net effect of "engulfing the class struggle and planning it", and where certain Marxist currents still bound to a Third International tradition continue to locate the class struggle almost exclusively in the imperialist moment of capital's development. The authors of *Operai e Stato*, on the other hand, attempt to understand the class struggle not so much as a mere theoretical concept whose value is primarily methodological, but as the fundamental reality of capitalism in its historical development, as that which shapes its dynamics at any given point.

The general theoretical framework of these essays rests on the Marxian concept of "social capital" which refers to the complex form capital takes on in its historical transition from private to collective capital, generating increasingly socialized mechanisms for the extraction of surplus value and recomposing the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

class struggle at higher levels. This approach has been elaborated recently by Mario Tronti in his work *Operai e Capitale*, soon to appear in English, and the authors under discussion acknowledge their debt to him.

The central concern here is not a theoretical reconstruction of social capital as a formal model, but rather the historical reconstruction of its dialectical movement, a task which entails concretely identifying its frontal clashes with the working class, re-tracing its moments of crisis, and re-assessing its leaps to new levels of development. This also entails advancing new hypotheses regarding the historical periodization of capitalist society, re-tracing what Tronti has called "capital's plan", i.e., capital's increasing realization of working-class autonomy, the latter's irreducibility as one of capital's components, the precariousness which marks capitalist development, and capital's constant search for new means with which to contain the process of dissolution inherent within it.

The historical period which the authors of *Operai e Stato* isolate is in fact the battleground in which capital fights a decisive struggle and achieves its most radical qualitative leap: from the workers' struggles of the first two decades of the century to the crisis of 1929, and on to the great institutional and class shake-up of the New Deal era.

The waves of workers' struggles which erupt at the international level throughout the first two decades of the century provide Sergio Bologna with the historical material for his analysis of the specific character which the class struggle took on. The methodological value of the hypothesis presented lies in the author's focus on the class composition of the various sectors of the workers' movement and in its relationship to the level of organic composition reached by capital in the various countries. Bologna shows how crucial it is to establish this link if one is to gain a clear understanding of the various ways in which the workers' revolutionary potential manifested itself, and consequently, the different ways in which capital responded to such threats. The Soviets in Russia, the IWW organization in the United States, and the workers' councils in Germany are viewed therefore as different articulations of different class-political compositions in relation to the different stages of development reached by capital in those various experiences.

The German workers-councils experience (upon which the author focuses) is closely linked with the structure of labor power in Germany's most advanced industrial sectors, such as machine tools, electromechanics, and optics. In these sectors the prevailing type of worker was the highly specialized worker, who worked in close association with the technicians and planning engineers and therefore participated in the elaboration of new working processes and viewed himself as "producer" and "inventor". Bologna identifies the revolutionary component of the German workers-councils movement not so much in the specific strategy pursued for gaining control of production but in the effect the movement had on the possibilities of development of German capital. The demand to control production articulated by skilled workers who were so inextricably linked to the production process and to the technical organization of work placed German capital in the impossibility of maneuvering along the same lines pursued, for instance, by American capital: the organic re-composition of capital. Bologna therefore sees a direct nexus between the rigidity imposed on German capital by the "labor aristocracies" which made up the workers-councils movement, and the imperialist adventure which plunged Germany into the first world conflict.

The movement's inability to translate at the level of political organization the objective power it had gained within production is ably analyzed by the author

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in connection with the long debate between Luxemburg and Lenin on the relationship between spontaneity and organization, and between class and party, as well as within the strategy pursued by the German social-democrats and the trade unions to co-opt the movement toward the end of the war. The movement's failure at the political level, however, does not detract from the real subversive effect it had not only on German capital, but also on international capital. The German workers-councils movement, in fact, contributed enormously to generating those intercapitalist contradictions which Lenin so ably captured in his analysis of imperialism. Its impact on international capital, moreover, was also felt after the war at Versailles. As Bologna puts it, "The imposition of 'that' treaty on Germany was practically dictated by the necessity of depriving the working class of the material bases for its very existence. Those who drafted the punitive clauses toward Germany had been forced to recognize the dual existence of the working class, i.e., as labor power inextricably tied to the material process of accumulation, and as a class irreducibly antagonistic to its development" (p.44). The movement, therefore, struck at the weakest point in the process of accumulation of international capital, i.e., Germany, and forced international capital to enter the battlefield of the working class. Herein lies the real revolutionary significance of the German workers-council experience.

In the U.S., Taylorism and Fordism are two capitalist "innovations" which, according to the authors of *Operai e Stato*, contribute enormously in affecting the terms of the class struggle. The first enters the industrial scene as an efficiency technique whose aim is essentially to decompose a work task into a set of motions, and then recompose it on the basis of precise indices of production. It lays the basis for the process of decomposition of labor power, for the complete objectification of work, and therefore for the massification of labor power. Fordism discovers the value and the dynamic function of wages, where the latter are not merely "incentives directly linked to the position that the single worker occupies in the enterprise", but become instead "aggregate quotas of income to be used in favor of the dynamics of the system, aggregate quotas of capital to be inserted within a framework of planned development" (p. 18). These are the two weapons developed by capitalism to allow the American vangard manufacturing industry to achieve a formidable technological leap, to revolutionize capital's relationship with labor power, to drastically alter the organic composition of capital, and to lay the foundations for a more rapid global socialization of capitalist production. It is this structural context in which the capitalist plan articulates itself which leads Bologna to see the IWW and its strategy of struggle as an extremely profound revolutionary intuition which anticipated the capitalist plan and tried to beat it precisely on its own ground. Capital would attempt to massify labor power and intensify the socialization of production; the Wobblies would respond by creating the "hobo agitator" who, unattached to any skill or factory, would exploit the enormous mobility and interchangeability which characterized the massified labor force, moving from one corner to the other on the American continent, and thus striking at capital precisely as "social capital". Not the attempt to "manage" capitalist production on the basis of factory-based workers-councils – as in the case of the German "workers' aristocracy" – but the attempt to socialize the class struggle, to generate the "social wildcat". We have here two expressions of "class-consciousness" which articulate themselves on two different battlegrounds which capital structures for itself, both revolutionary, both operating in the heat of the dialectic of capitalist development.

In the end it is not the "final score" that counts, when one looks at the IWW

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experience: under the violent blows of capital, they were decimated and destroyed, thus becoming little more than source material for the historiography which takes delight in the comparative analysis of labor movements. What counts instead is the IWW's ability to identify the figure of the collective worker and to discover its inherently revolutionary character, the material basis of a confrontation with collective capital. For these reasons the IWW represents – as Bologna puts it – "the direct passage from Marx's First International to the post-Communist era" (p. 20).

In the hypothesis of the historical periodization of capital's development advanced by the authors of *Operai e Stato*, the 1920's take on a particular importance. These are the years in which international capital is forced to enter the battlefield of the class struggle. The task capital now faces is a dual one, as Gobbini explains in his essay on the British General Strike of 1926: to "find forms of socialization of production which are more organic to its development, and prevent the working class from organizing subjectively and politically the autonomy it now possesses" (pp. 61-62). First, it is necessary to isolate – both militarily and diplomatically – the Soviet Union, which stands as the international symbol of workers' victory over capital and as the attempt "to reconstitute the material basis for the growth of the working class" (Bologna, p. 45). Secondly, it is necessary to weaken systematically the working class and prevent it from reconstituting itself as a revolutionary force. This capitalist offensive takes different forms in various countries. In England, for example, capital (with the aid of the Labour Party and the trade unions) has to contend with a very tenacious shop steward movement which forces British industry to enter the class struggle at the factory level, thus generating a subversive dynamic among the British workers' movement which erupts in the General Strike of 1926. Gobbini, who analyzes this movement in the context of the British industrial structure of the 1920's, sees in that experience "the workers' answer to the attempt to make organic at the social level of production those organizational forms of labor power which had been introduced during the war production period" (p. 58). The result is the failure of that strategy which the author calls "enlightened reformism", i.e., the experimentation with new forms of integration of labor power, following the lead of the cooperative schemes of the war period. The consequences for both British and international capital were to be very serious.

In the United States, where after the war the labor movement was reduced to insignificance and where before the war capital had perfected forms of integration of labor power (the so-called social welfare plans), the process of socialization of production makes gigantic leaps forward. Taylorism and Fordism become widespread, allowing American capital to reach increasingly higher levels of organic recomposition. Capital pursues what Negri calls "the technological path to repression" (p. 71). Rather than effecting a revolution in its political relationship with the *working class*, as British capital attempts to do, American capital generates the "managerial revolution" and sets out to produce the collective worker who, if on the one hand appears as "the carrying structure and very propeller of capitalist development, on the other hand contains in himself in an irreducible way a subversive potential" (p. 72) According to the authors of *Operai e Stato*, it is capital's refusal to "acknowledge the necessary, efficacious impact of the workers' political particularity" that produces the failure of its project in the 1920's. The capitalist project backfires and produces the 1929 crisis. As Negri puts it, the capitalist project of the 1920's avoided the real problem, "the acknowledgement of the political emergence of the working class,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and with it the exigency of not only further perfecting the social mechanism for the extraction of relative surplus value, but rather of completely restructuring it in a situation where the acknowledgement of workers' autonomy is coupled with the ability to exert coutrol over it" (p. 71).

The dialectical moments in the development of capital begin to stand out more clearly. If 1917 is the concrete demonstration that the working class subverts the capitalist project and attempts to constitute itself as State, 1929 appears as the failure of the new capitalist project to reconstitute its relations of power with the working class in a way that is functional to its development. In strategic terms, the counteroffensive of capital during the 1920's unfolds on two levels kept rigidly separated: the level of production ("the technological path to repression") and the level of diplomacy (international isolation of 1917). It is Keynes who, endowed with exceptional political intuition, realizes how this strategy carries with it the seeds of impending disaster. In the first of his two essays, Negri traces the development of Keynesian poelmics against the political behavior of international capital during the 1920's, and his repeated appeals that the two levels of action be unified, i.e., that, in Keynes' own words, "the problems of international politics be subsumed to those of the internal organization of power relations" (p. 78). Negri shows how throughout this stage of criticism a new conception of state intervention emerges in Keynes, one which must be founded on the acknowledgement of the irreducible conflictual potential of the working class. Keynes realized very well how the relationship between capital and working class appeared modified; he realized equally well that this modification called forth a new type of "insertion" of the working class into capitalist development. It is the *quality* of this insertion, Negri explains, which Keynes was as yet unable to determine. It would take the experience of 1929 to transform Keynes' political intuition into a comprehensive theory for the reconstruction of the modern capitalist state. Hence, that "political manifesto" (as Negri calls it) which is Keynes' *General Theory*, his search for an alternative to the crisis which can re-launch capitalist development while at the same time insuring its equilibrium; hence his articulation of the concept of "effective demand" resting on the postulate of the "downward rigidity of wates", his acknowledgement of the "wage-unit" as the fundamental "independent, definitive variable" of the system, the embodiment of labor power's autonomy, and hence the irreducibility in Keynes of the working class as "an autonomous moment within capital" (p. 90).

The reform programs carried out in the New Deal tend to recompose power relations with the working class precisely by playing on the wage unit: as Ferrari-Bravo says in his essay on the New Deal programs, "by assigning to wages the function of quota of income strategically used in the dynamics of the system, [and by assigning] to the working class the function of capital's 'mobile motor' " (p. 123). The genial intuition of Fordism is now extended to the level of social economy. In this context, the need to "trade unionize" labor power becomes most urgent, not only in order to stabilize and mediate "the direct relationship between the state and the worker (as a social figure), a relationship which is intrinsically explosive" (p. 114), but also because "labor organizations . . . can provoke and guarantee the resumption and acceleration of development, starting from the *only point* on the basis of which it is acknowledged that such resumption can be realized in a stable manner" (p. 110). "Trade unionization is, or becomes, a directly capitalist exigency and need" (p. 109). Thus, Ferrari-Bravo sees in the Wagner Act "the heart of the New Deal" (p. 121), the mechanism which establishes "a fundamental and direct relation-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship between state and *labor*, between capitalist development and workers' struggles" (p. 111).

Viewed from the standpoint of the inherently contradictory relationship between labor power and capital, between the political working class and capital's plan of development, the capitalist crisis which erupts in 1929 acquires an aspect which is rich in meaning. It is the first great crisis of social capital; the collective capitalist finds himself confronted by the collective worker. Collective capital is forced to acknowledge its own precariousness, i.e., that the cyclicity of its development always leads to an explosion at a higher level of its contradictory nature.

The crisis becomes the ground for a thorough verification of power relations. Through the repeated Rooseveltian experiments, it becomes increasingly clear that the "insertion" of the working class into capitalist development requires the state to carry out a new, revolutionary function: the state as planner. "It is necessary that the state become itself an economic structure and, as such, a *productive subject*" (p. 88). What Roosevelt pursues at the practical level, Keynes articulates at the scientific level.

Ferrari-Bravo's perceptive analysis of the institutional dynamics generated during the New Deal by the attempt to recompose power relations acquires further relevance when read in conjunction with Negri's second essay on the capitalist cycle, crisis, and development. The author shows how, after the harsh blows capital suffered during its crises, it became more urgent than ever for capitalist science to control the cyclicity of capital, and to insure that the aggregate movement of the components of the system are constantly brought to an equilibrium in which its inherent contradictions can be contained. Whether it becomes a matter of programming the development in such a way that it becomes an alternative to the crisis (Keynes), or of seeing in the crisis an essential moment of capital's cyclical development which must be recovered and translated in terms of the development – i.e., to re-launch a new cyclical stage – (Schumpeter), the crucial point is that "capital's critical consciousness" (as Negri calls it) acknowledges that capitalist development rests on power relations and that they demand constant, absolute domination by capital over development. Negri shows how Schumpeter's intuition goes much farther than Keynes': whereas in the latter we have essentially a formalist articulation in search of a hypothetical equilibrium, in Schumpeter we have instead an invocation of the crisis as a springboard for the innovation and reactivation of the economic process: the crisis becomes the battleground which gives rise to "the qualitatively new relationship between capital and the aggregate elements of production". Thus, it becomes "a political project for the re-examination of the relationship" (p. 201). The similarity between Schumpeter's and Marx's theories on the relationship between crisis and development is striking. But, whereas the former leads to mystificatory models typical of institutionalism, which dissolve class antagonisms, Marx's theory leads, as Negri shows through a meticulous reconstruction, to the fundamental relation underlying capital's reality, i.e., the antagonistic relation between labor power and profit, between working class and capital. Negri elaborates the relationship between crisis and development at the level of social capital, characterized by the emergence of "social profit" which is constantly threatened by working class pressures. It is at this level that capital's domination over development cannot be resolved on the basis of mere economic means: the mechanisms needed to insure development cannot be left to the mere interplay of economic fores but must of necessity be reconstituted at the political level. As Negri puts it, "development and crisis, dialectically linked, show the vicissitudes of a capital which must continually

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recreate its power relations and which is continually forced to seek a clash in order to re-launch its own development. The regulatory mechanism of the cycle is wholly recovered at the political level; and here is the crisis, i.e., the moment of victory in the clash, is determining. Thus, profit is regained, but it is now closed and destined to the political function of capital" (p. 220). Here we have the theoretical and practical presuppositions for the new capitalist state which stands as the guarantor of development and the administrator of social profit but which does not and cannot eliminate the fundamental precariousness of the relationship between crisis and development: it can only "accentuate it".

Although these essays have the character of interpretative hypotheses which require further elaboration, this should not detract from their value as useful material for the activation of new strategies of research and action at the level of social capital. One thing that appears with striking clarity from them is that one can hardly talk of class analysis without appreciating the new forms of the class struggle in the dialectic of capital's development, and the objective possibilities of the working class to re-launch the struggle in the context of the capitalist project. In this context the reconstruction – on the basis of concrete historical analysis – of those *dialectical passages* which have led the state from its function as mediator of the class struggle to its new role as the very embodiment of that struggle, is one of the fundamental contributions of these essays.

This leads us to a reconsideration of the immediate relationship between class analysis and class strategy in the context of social capital. Here the protracted debate between Luxemburg and Lenin on the relationship between the objectivity of the revolutionary moment and the subjective action of the party reappears in all its present day relevance: it must be recaptured by rooting it in a rigorous analysis of political class composition in the present stage of capitalist development. This is, in a certain sense, what Bologna strives to do when he rejects the use of the concept "class consciousness" viewed as a spiritual entity, and attempts instead to provide it with material-historical content by linking it to the dynamics of the forces of production. In this context, the emergence of the mass worker – on the one hand the counter-revolutionary solution sought by advanced capitalism, on the other the objective basis for the reconstitution of working class autonomy at the level of social capital – constitutes one of the most important new facts of present capitalist reality. It characterizes the current political class composition of the capitalist system and therefore, according to the authors of *Operai e Stato* is the key for a revolutionary working class strategy. This structural-material tendency of advanced capitalism may be difficult to grasp, especially where the process of tertiarization of production has reached an extremely advanced stage. Here, to the massification of labor power (and to the de-skillization of the labor force corresponds an ever increasing proliferation of 'qualifications' and a growing hierarchization in the organization of production: the former being an objective, material process of capitalist forces of production, the latter being capitalist ideological strategy to conceal the mechanisms through which the political recomposition of the working class occurs. In this new context, the attack against the concept of "qualification" becomes a major weapon of the workers against the "class science" of capital, and is one of the tenets of the proletariat in its struggle against the mystifying mechanisms of the bourgeoisie. The slogan recently used by the FIAT workers "at the assembly line we are all equal" would become "in the social factory we are all equal".

From the analysis and theses advanced in *Operai e Stato* there emerges a clearer outline of the different lines of strategy open to the working class and the varying degrees of political significance they assume. Thus, the struggle for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

workers' control of production in itself would seem, according to the authors, to have lost much of its political potential in a productive context which, as already pointed out, tends to increasingly massify and therefore to detach and uproot labor power from the means of production. From the viewpoint of strategy, this is one of the major underlying implications of Bologna's essay on the German workers' council movement, whose revolutionary significance consists primarily in their attack against capital's plan for its organic development and recomposition, rather than in their possibility of becoming workers' organs for the control of a future society. This hypothesis would seem to have found further verification in the recent experience of workers' struggles in Italy where the demand for increasing workers' control in the factory was a leading one. As De Masi has put it, this strategy "has only meant workers' management of piecework and of all levels of their own exploitation".[1] That experience has, moreover, brought to the surface all the old problems of the relationship between workers' councils and labor unions or, stated differently, the problem of the labor unions' reformist use of the workers' councils.

The strategy with the highest degree of revolutionary potential is, according to the authors of *Operai e Stato*, the struggle over wages, where wages are viewed as the focal nexus of class antagonism and as the fundamental link between social (political) profit and the mechanism of exploitation. It is not the struggle for wages typical of "business unionism" where demands for wage raises are linked to productivity and always fall within the limits of national income policies (therefore becoming political manipulation of the working class by the state through the labor unions). Instead, it becomes a struggle against the capitalist process of accumulation: a struggle where wages become the revolutionary assertion of the working class's autonomous needs. The workers' struggle at this level would have a direct effect in upsetting the overall structure of the system by generating a crisis in the very mechanisms of development, thereby forcing capital to seek new power relations with the working class.

The fundamental problem of the relationship between struggle centered on wages and the particular organizational expression this struggle would take remains open; but the authors underline the importance of the actual moment of struggle: only revolutionary praxis itself can give rise to the organizational base through which the link between wages and workers' power can be forged.

Bruno Ramirez

1. G. De Masi, *et al, I Consigli Operai* (Roma, Edizioni Samona e Savelli, 1972), p. 106.

Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt* (Beacon Press, 1972).

Marcuse's new book, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt,* attempts to articulate the subjective and objective factors leading to the re-emergence of radical politics in advanced capitalist society. Following the trend of *An Essay on Liberation* this book indicates a movement of critical theory away from a purely ideological critique of capitalism (expressed, for instance, in *One-Dimensional Man*) in that theoretical criticism now finds its practical expression in the developing political movements in opposition to the system. Marcuse's intention

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here seems to be to make critical theory enter more directly into the service of a socio-political practice under way. How well this intention is realized will be discussed later in this review. But first we will turn to an exposition of the three basic themes developed in this book. They are: (a) the specification of the historical unfolding of the present totality, focusing on the political and social implications of Capitalism's expanded economic base; (b) an examination of the subjectivity of the social groups in their present political and cultural opposition to Capitalism, attempting to determine the essential truth of the expressions of this subjective moment from the standpoint of the objective conditions of revolutionary practice; and (c) the reformulation, and in some instances, the rejection, of certain concepts in orthodox Marxist Theory, due to their insufficiency or irrelevancy with respect to the clarification of the subjective and conditions of liberation from Capitalism in its present phase.

Capitalism is presently a global system. The process of reproduction and expansion of capital, previously the task of individually owned enterprises operating within a relatively competitive national and international market, has given way to the collective coordination of this operation through mammouth intercontinental corporations. Former regional and national rivalries are minimized in the interests of the system as a whole; and the interests of the whole are the continued expansion of capital and the collective defense against the threat of revolution.

Marcuse employs the concepts of 'collective capital' and 'collective labor' in order to replace those of 'capitalist' and 'proletariat,' since the latter, expressing the social antagonism of a more primitive period of capitalist development, no longer serve to comprehend the objective socio-economic structure of the present: "At the latest stage of economic and political concentration, the particular capitalist enterprises in all sectors of the economy are being subordinated to the requirements of capital as a whole (*Gesamtkapital*). This coordination takes place on two interrelated levels: through the normal economic process under monopolistic competition (growing organic composition of capital; pressure on the rate of profit); and through 'state management'" (p. 9)

This development of 'collective capital' brings into its service and control a growing percentage of that stratum of the formerly independent middle classes, that now become instrumental in the creation of surplus value. In addition to the growth of the 'tertiary sector' (production of services), the technological character of the productive base requires a large functional intelligentsia; likewise essential to the production and expansion of capital. "The base of exploitation is thus enlarged beyond the factories and shops, and far beyond the blue collar working class." (p. 10) The concept of the 'collective worker' serves a double function: (1) to indicate the expansion of the productive base of labor; and (2) to express the functional integration of traditional and the newly developed sectors of this productive base in the process of capital reproduction as a whole.

Much of what Marcuse has to say here should by now be familiar to us, since the sources for his analysis are for the most part drawn from the scholarship of the new left. Nevertheless, it is necessary to specify the practical implications this analysis is meant to have for the clarification of the question concerning the revolutionary potential of the industrial proletariat.

The revolutionary potential of a class is determined on the basis of its objective relation within the social totality. According to Marcuse, the development of global capitalism results in the qualitative restructuring of class

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relations, making any attempt to locate the revolutionary agency of advanced capitalism either solely or predominantly in the blue collar workers, regressive. The formation of 'collective capital' and 'collective labor' indicates the supercession of the singular link between productive labor and the industrial blue collar worker, as the system now functions in such a way as to make the collective activity of both newly developed, as well as previously non-productive sectors of labor, essential to the realization of surplus value.

Traditional Marxist theory had located the revolutionary subject in this class because of its specific relationship to the development of the system as a whole. The industrial working class was (in-itself) revolutionary, not simply because it suffered immiseration under capitalist productive relations, but, rather, as the fundamental producer of surplus value, as the basis of productive labor, this class activity produced the 'fact' of its own immiseration. To abolish this 'fact', the proletariat had to constitute itself as a political class, a class 'for-itself', in order to abolish the capitalist relations of production, and proceed to establish production on a new basis, the basis of freely associated producers.

The theoretical unity achieved in the 19th century between economic categories (labor-capital), social categories (proletariat-bourgeoisie), and political categories (labor = proletariat = revolutionary class/capital = bourgeoisie = ruling class) was founded on the actual unity of relations in the social totality of that period. But such a unity could only be projected into the future insofar as capitalism was taken to be a closed system of reproduction.

Viewed as a closed system, there was thought to be an essential unity between the pursuit of immediate interests by the proletariat – higher wages, shorter working hours – and the development of the consciousness of long range or *real* interests – socialist revolution. The very pursuit of immediate interests required the proletariat's own self-organization, but any realization of immediate interests was thought to be a temporary affair since the closed system of capitalist reproduction made it structurally unable to accommodate and stabilize the achievements of the immediate producers as a whole. The proletariat could only realize their immediate interests by abandoning them and struggling for their real interests – the abolition of capitalist productive relations.

The historical development of capitalism has altered the relation of industrial labor to capital within the province of the national economy. The historical organization of labor into a political class for the pursuit of immediate interests, owing to its very success, arrests their development at the level of non-revolutionary economistic interests. The pursuit of immediate interests is not only capable of being met by capital, but it serves to expedite the further collectivization of capital, leading to both the economic and political stabilization of the system as a whole. As Marcuse puts it: "To be sure, revolutionary consciousness has always expressed itself in revolutionary situations; the differnece is that, now, the condition of the working class in society at large militates against the development of such a consciousness. The integration of the largest part of the working class into capitalist society is not a surface phenomenon: it has its roots in the infrastructure itself, in the political economy of monopoly capitalism: benefits accorded to the metropolitan working class thanks to surplus profits, neocolonial exploitation, the military budget, and gigantic government subventions." (p. 6)

The analysis offered by Marcuse serves to question not only the adequacy of the traditional conceptualization of the objective relation beween capital and the industrial proletariat, but also a prevalent assumption concerning the formation of revolutionary consciousness. If there is in fact a coordination between the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

immediate interests of the worker and the long range interests of capital, then the reification of the consciousness of the producers is sustained, reinforced, rather than broken, at the point of production. The objective conditions of labor serve to affirm an alienated consciousness rather than promote the development of consciousness of alienation.

It should be pointed out that this conclusion does not correspond with the Leninist conclusion concerning the necessity for a revolutionary party to mediate the reformist consciousness of the working class, because Marcuse is here denying the possibility of such a mediation given the continuity of interests between capital and labor. The historical practice of organized working class parties have provided ample empirical evidence of the outcome of such an attempted mediation. – an abstract theoretical mediation whose expressed goal being revolution, succeeds in practice to be the servant of precisely the immediate interests of labor, and thus the servant to the further collectivization of capital.

In the present period, revolutionary interest can only be the expression of 'immediate needs' that transcend the economy of alienated labor. Once the availability of the means of subsistence is no longer an immediate need, the pre-condition for the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness must be the experience of new, immediate, and necessarily vital needs, that are incapable of accommodation within the capitalist system. We will return to this point later on when we consider the infrastructural foundation for the emergence of these needs, and examine the theoretical expression of the consciousness of these needs referred to by Marcuse as a 'new sensibility.' But before we do this we should not lose the practical lesson to be learned from this analysis: namely, attempts to organize blue collar workers at the point of production, primarily over 'bread and butter' issues, is at best a waste of energy, and at worst counter-productive.

In *One-Dimensional Man*, and again in *An Essay on Liberation*, Marcuse argues that a new subject must emerge prior to and as a pre-condition to socialism. This new subject must embody and articulate needs which reflect the historical potentiality for a non-repressive social order, made possible by, but necessarily laying beyond the present organization of life. But to be something more than a category of critical theory, such a subject must emerge as a response to the contradictions of capitalism, and must be a real historical force expressive universal interests. In *One-Dimensional Man,* Marcuse, recognizing the integration and harmonization of social forces in advanced capitalism, professed the inadequacy of critical theory to locate such a revolutionary social force. At best, the opposition might come from the 'outsiders' and 'outcasts' of the system. At present this opposition has emerged, and while it exists 'outside' the theoretical framework of orthodox marxism, the evidence suggests that this opposition, loosely referred to as the 'new left', reflects, not an accidental flaw in an otherwise harmonious system, but rather, an essential contradiction within the system itself. The 'outsiders' and 'outcasts' of capitalism are not tokens of the system's productive insufficiency, but on the contrary, they are tokens of its very success – success in the sense that the growth in the productivity of labor has significantly altered the ratio between 'necessary labor time' and potentially 'free time', and this fact seriously threatens the ideological justification for the perpetuation of alienated labor presently required by capitalism. Whereas in a previous period of less efficient utilization of labor power, repressive forms of labor appeared to be as much a necessity imposed by nature as a product of the socio-historical relations of production, in the present this repression is the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

singular requisite of the political and social interests of the ruling classes. The potentially free time made possible by the level of technological development is rigidly controlled in the form of production of purposely non-durable commodities, the multiplication of waste, military spending and the forced creation of a consumer market, which in turn, involves the control of the remaining potentially 'free time' as 'leisure time' – a time to perpetuate the needs for unlimited consumption.

Apparently the continuum of repression required by the present organization of production is most easily broken among those sectors of the population who are least affected by the work process. The balance of tension between the 'inner-worldly-asceticism' traditionally required as a consequence of the perpetuation of alienated labor, and the hedonism encouraged by the requirements of the burgeoning consumer market, is broken first among those whose sensibilities and instincts have been least mutilated by the competitive work process. In other words, the *controlled* de-sublimation required by the consumer market begins to get out of control as necessity for repression is freed from the struggle for life. According to Marcuse, capitalism digs its own grave, in that it places mutually antagonistic demands on the instincts – both their repression and de-sublimation; and to those who have already begun to rebel against the conditions sustaining this contradiction (the repression as well as the repressive de-sublimation of the instincts) this repression required by capitalism becomes an increasingly repulsive feature of a system whose historical existence no longer has a claim to rational justification.

The opposition to late capitalism expresses itself as both a political and a cultural movement. This movement is composed of elements from different strata of the population, functioning in different ways relative to the productive process – minority groups, women, youth of a predominantly disaffected intelligentsia. The instinctive rebellion against the system is at this point more widespread than the unsuccessful attempts to politically organize this opposition might indicate. The weakness of the political organization of the opposition is, however, due to several factors, not the least of which has been the determination of the ruling powers to crush this rebellion in all of its diverse manifestations, ranging from the use of murder, jailing to the control of budgets to squeeze out experimental programs, intimidate the universities, and threaten the students with fear of competition for jobs. The extent of the response of the ruling powers to this political opposition attests to the potential threat this rebellion poses to the whole.

But the difficulties of the new left are also an expression of an internal weakness. The lack of an adequate theoretical grasp of its situation has led to the separation of what was an already loose political unity into two abstract and ineffectual alternatives. On the one side, the cultural moment of the new left has tended to degenerate into an apolitical 'pot pourri' of homespun recipes for personal liberation, ranging from organic food communes to the more insideous and destructive escapes found in hard drugs. On the other side, the political moment has reverted to obsolescent dogmas of a previous radical tradition, and an engagement in disruptive sectarian squabbles at a time when the greatest need is for the organization of a broad based unity to counter the inroads of the reaction.

As the alternatives of individual liberation or Leninist style political parties are both abstract, what is called for are decentralized forms of organization which preserve and develop the cultural oppositions under the directive of the political exigencies of the present period, and the long range objective of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

socialist revolution. The political practice of these organizations must under present conditions seek alliances with liberals as the occasion calls for it. The rationale for this being that the power of the opposition needs to develop before it is in a position to write off all other political forces as serving the reation. As a final sobering note Marcuse remarks that the final struggle against capitalism may take a century.

Thus far I have concentrated predominantly on the infrastructural analysis, and its political consequences, presented by Marcuse in the first part of his book. It is now time to turn to the discussion of themes which have for some time constituted Marcuse's distinct contribution to critical theory. These themes, 'the new sensibility', and the 'negative character of art', are taken up in the last two chapters of *Counter-Revolution and Revolt.* While these chapters do not reveal anything surprisingly new in Marcuse's thinking, they do serve to clarify his previous work, and also attempt to bring this highly theoretical material in closer relation to the more immediate issues of radical politics.

In chapter two, Marcuse introduces the question of the role of nature in revolution. Although nature can be distinguished in two senses, as 'human nature and objective nature', they both share a common fate in that they are inseparably linked in the process of history as man's self-creation through labor. In the present historical period, the liberation of nature is an essential moment in the project of man's self-liberation from capitalism. This idea already expresses its antagonistic relation to bourgeois thought and practice. The historical project of capitalism, the unlimited expansion of productive power, is realized through a theory and practice which construes and existentially defines man's relationship to nature as one of dominance of the subject over the object, an object that is in-itself devoid of significance, of its own truth. Nature is 'pure materiality', 'pure stuff' of transformation and control. The project conditions, and in turn is reproduced, in the instinctual substructure of man (human nature), and this conditioning is reflected in the perceptual and sensorial field of the historical subject. The organization of life under the 'performance principle' represses the instinctual forces, channeling them into socially useful activity – *eros,* mutilated and restricted to the sphere of reproduction, *aggression,* into the sphere of labor and warfare.

The revolt against this project finds its expression in the 'new sensibility', a new sensous, and perceptual relationship to nature, both human and objective nature – which recognizes nature as a 'subject in its own right'.

For the 'new sensibility', nature becomes an ally in the desire and struggle for an end to the capitalist social order, and the construction of a new order founded on the liberation of the life forces (eros). Such a society, as Marcuse has told us in other writings, would be governed at its material base by the 'aesthetic principle'.

How does this idea of nature as 'subject', an idea traditionally associated with idealistic romanticism, find a place in historical materialism? Can such a notion find a justification independent of metaphysical speculation, and does such a notion violate the theory of orthodox Marxism which construes man's real relationship to nature as fundamentally appropriative?

Marcuse turns to two sources in order to vindicate this notion: Kant's *Critique of Judgment,* and Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.*

In the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant notes that the experience of pleasure (and pain) appears to play a role in cognition, insofar as 'disinterested pleasure' enters into the unity of an intuition of purposeful organization of a sensuous content,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

represented by the aesthetic judgment. The content of this intuition is seen as organizing itself through laws integral to the phenomena itself – laws of harmony, proportion, symmetry, i.e., of beauty. The content reveals its self-organization through a purpose that does not intend any further purpose external to it – the judgment reflects an intuition of a 'purposiveness without a purpose.' As the judgment applies to instances of natural as well as artistic objects, it is indicative of the potentiality of the mind to recognize in nature a 'subject in its own right'. Marcuse, following the lead of Kant here, refuses to give to the faculty of judgment a constitutive role in knowledge of the object, and instead, where Kant treats teleology as a regulative idea, Marcuse would have it become a governing idea of an historical project beyond the capitalist organization of life.

Marcuse's treatment of 'teleology' as a project indicates a certain unwillingness to push his thinking, epistemologically, beyond the point where Kant left it. Apparently he has found himself placed in the difficult position of trying to preserve the materialistic restrictions placed on human knowledge, i.e. limiting knowledge to the conceptual mediation of a sensory intuition, and at the same time, allow for the transcendence of this conceptually mediated cognition via direct intuition, in order to assert the possibility of overcoming an historically conditioned and reified mode of conceptualization. Now, whereas orthodox Marxism has attempted to resolve this problem by supposing that scientific practice is the means for this transcendence of historically conditioned modes of conceptualization, Marcuse, under the influence of phenomenology, had already relegated scientific practice to the superstructure, i.e. its conceptual foundations are conditioned by the base and thus reflect the alienation of this practice in bourgeois society.

Since the new historical project is not simply invented, since it is founded on the intuition of nature as subject, we must assume that this intuition is objective, that it penetrates beyond the veil of reified categories. If not, then the idea of 'nature of subject' succumbs either to speculation, or a rather whimsical existentialism, re-asserting once again an abstract subject power over the object and falling back into the trap of bourgeois ideology. And yet to hold out the possibility of direct intuition into the real form of things, things-themselves, leaves one open to the damning charge of objective idealism.

Marcuse attempts to escape from this charge by enlisting the support of the young Marx. The point, – to try to discover the notion of intuition into the form of things, prior to their historical mediation through categories, within the center the dialectical materialism itself. For Marcuse Marx's emphasis on the sensous nature of man's being, is not to be interpreted as an epistemological deference to empiricism, an empiricism that sees only in the senses a passive medium for a fixed content to be ground up and re-synthesized by general categories. The object of cognition for empiricism is already an historically conditioned object of thought. It is not the real object of sensuous immediacy. This reflected object hides the potentialities of things for the senses. But on the other hand, the reflected object is an expression of the limited and alienated sensuous relationship man has to nature in the work process. The form of labor in bourgeois society conditions the senses in their synthetic function. Marx holds out the possibilities of an intuition into the true form of things insofar as he asserts that the process of appropriation of the object can proceed in accordance with the measure inherent in the things themselves, i.e. in accordance with the laws of beauty. Here the notion of things having their own measure, indicates

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for Marcuse, the perception of nature as a 'subject'. It opens up the possibility of a radical restructuring of man's existential relationship to nature, once freed from the debilitating organization of life under the capitalist mode of production.

Marcuse's reference to the 1844 manuscripts here, serves the purpose of introducing a trojan horse into the citadel of orthodox dialectical materialism. That this trojan horse has the possibility of being placed within this camp should hardly be something at this date to wonder at. The theory is only a kind of conceptual casing for the dynamite of the cultural movement that has for some time shown little respect for the weight of orthodoxy, whether of the left or of the right.

The final chapter of this book (excluding a brief summary) deals with the nature of art and its role in revolution. I will limit myself to a brief exposition of its salient points. Marcuse points to the inadequacy of treating art forms as singular manifestations of an historical formation, and thus limited in their truth to that period. The form of the work of art seems to express a truth that transcends its specific historical content. Indeed, the truth lies precisely in the transformation of an historically conditioned content into a unified, harmonious aesthetic form. While the art object is indeed an illusion, it possesses its power of negativity to a real world of alienation, precisely in its illusory transformation of an empirically real but historically false content into a meaningful, aesthetically pleasing whole. Art reveals the suppressed possibilities of things, of words, of sounds, of actions. Marcuse admits the difficulty of dissociating the trans-historical form from the limited class biased content. He justifies this separation by pointing to the fact that we continue to respond to the form of works of art, whose content has long since ceased to find a basis in our daily lives, e.g. greek tragedy, renaissance painting, etc.

And yet there is something else problematic about art from the standpoint of revolutionary theory. It is unclear whether it is the form or the content of art that functions ideologically. (We are not speaking here about styles, for example realism, naturalism, but rather the art form itself). Orthodox Marxism has tended to identify form with style, and has proceeded to deal with the question of art's ideological function by distinguishing realism from all other styles as the only progressive aesthetic form. When a subject matter that deals with the life of social classes from the standpoint of the objective conditions and interests of the proletariat is presented through a realistic form, the work becomes revolutionary art. In practice, this theory known as socialist realism, has had a rather shady history since many of the model works in this tradition have been written (or perhaps rewritten) to conform to the definition of reality layed down by the party bureaucracy. On the other hand, the 'avant garde' has tended to launch a campaign against the aesthetic form itself. Seeing, not just in classicism, or naturalism or what have you, but in the tradition of art as a closed form (a harmonious integration of content) an affirmative, a counter-revolutionary function, they have attempted to develop a kind of anti-art form designed to arouse rather than to pacify the mind.

In a rather polite way, Marcuse pronounces a plague on both their houses. Their mutual fallacy is in supposing art to be possible when designed to serve an immediate political interest. To attempt to shatter the illusory nature of the aesthetic form is to produce or reproduce the immediacy of the false and mutilated existence of men in this society. For Marcuse, art seems to be an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

activity disclosing a dimension of life, permanently antagonistic to the present order of things, including precisely the immediate struggles of people in the political sphere to free themselves from their oppressors.

Coming under critical fire in this discussion is not only the activities (or anti-activities) traditionally associated with the higher culture (living theatre, etc.) but, also the popular culture of white rock music. Marcuse sees in the content, the form of presentation and the collective responses to this music an expression and release of agression, an outpouring of repressed energy, serving nothing more than the expenditure of frustration, which in the end, leaves things exactly as they are. Marcuse exempts black popular music from this unflattering evaluation, and somewhat arbitrarily at that. Actually, the problem here is that Marcuse's treatment of popular culture is rather impressionistic.

This book has several problems. First, the material dealing with the changing base of capitalism is incomplete. While the collectivization of capital is clearly the predominant trend, the fundamental economic problems created by this process are overlooked. Many left economists have pointed to the inherent tensions wroght by the collectivization process (Baran and Sweezy, Mandel, Magdoff). Advanced capitalism is not as *economically* stable as Marcuse makes it seem – there are growing problems of unemployment, competition from foreign products (even if owned by American corporations), technological obsolescence, etc. Granted, these problems do not lead to a revolutionary crisis; but that is not the point. The point is that the analysis of capitalism as an economic system is weak. And the consequences of this weakness come out clearly when we consider the problem of organization.

In general, everything that Marcuse has to say about organization is sound. But the one fundamental question, the question whose answer is a must, if the discussion of organization is to have any concreteness, is neither asked nor answered: "Who is to be organized?" The industrial proletariat has been disqualified (temporarily? – Marcuse doesn't commit himself here). What about this new strata constituting the expanded base of exploitation? Marcuse appears to reject any attempt to treat this strata as a new working class. Treating them as a separate class appears unjustified. And as part of the expanded base, they should be as responsive or unresponsive to political organization as workers in general; or is this so? We are not informed. Actually, in Marcuse's discussion of organization, issues that center on the work place – workers control, etc. – or issues centering on community life – schools, local politics, housing – are not seriously considered. This leaves one with the rather dismal conclusion that the left has only itself to organize; and even more dismal than this, we are also given the impression that Marcuse's vision of the left (in spite of all his utopianism) extends no farther than student politics (no wonder it may take a century for the final struggle against capitalism to occur).

Actually the question of organizational strategy cannot be seriously worked out until the analysis of the present structure of capitalism is worked out – concretely; such concreteness is precisely what is missing.

Perhaps the omission is not just an oversight, but the reflection of a dilemma – both his as well as ours. The dilemma is that the outbreak of opposition to advanced capitalism has fallen along lines that defy incorporation into a class analysis – at least an analysis such as might be available at the present time. Without such an analysis we are left with an empty form – "such events are socio-historically determined", in order to avoid the temptation of subjectivistic and arbitrary explanations of such events. Perhaps Marcuse's use of the Freudian apparatus of 'instinctual revolt' is precisely such an arbitrary model

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of explanation. But there are more and better reasons than this that lead Marcuse to rely on Freud for an understanding of the present. Without getting into this, let it just be pointed out that: (a) there is no adequate class analysis of contemporary capitalism available, one capable of explaining the outbreak of opposition in the 60's; and (b) that the subjective moment of this opposition has taken a form that defies the traditional analysis of material needs; the cultural revolution seems to govern the political, and disclose the economic, and not vice versa. Whether the cultural moment is capable of assimilation into everyday capitalist life remains an open question – whether 'feely-touchy sessions' between businessmen and their secretaries, or college administrators and the head of the student senate will succeed in making advanced capitalism a 'pretty decent place to live' has yet to be decided. One thing is certain: the ruling apparatus has brought its full powers into sway in the last five years to take the edge off the movement.

On the whole, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt* does not make any new brilliant starts in critical theory. Marcuse continues to pursue the problem that has since his earliest writing under the influence of Heidegger always remained uppermost in his thinking: the relation of need, perception, theory and revolt. In a nutshell, the emphasis has always been on the subjective moment of revolutionary change – and rightfully so, given the failings of the Second and Third International Marxism in this century. Clearly this search for a theory articulating the subjective factors results in a flirtation with the late Kant, Schiller, Freud – the romantic underground of the 19th century. But if contemporary Marxism cannot find a place for this moment, then it has yet to find a place for man's emergence from the nightmare he has called history.

Alexander Delfini

Jean Piaget, *Epistémologie des Sciences de l'Homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 380 pp.

This publication brings together three sections of Piaget's enormous study published by UNESCO, *Tendances Principales de la Recherche dans les Sciences Sociales et Humaines.* In this two volume work Piaget attempts to develop, in rejecting the hierarchical treatment of the sciences, the specificity of each level of research and its reciprocity with other levels without a reduction of all levels to one (psychology to bio-chemistry, for example). Piaget has described his view as one where "rather than envisaging human knowledge as a pyramid or building of some sort, we should think of it as a spiral the radius of whose turns increases as the spiral rises."[1] Not only does the work under review serve to bring together in a concise and remarkably clear fashion the dominant themes of Piaget's thought but his integrative style, both in its opposition to the pigeon-holing division of intellectual labor and the scientism that usually occasions philosophy of science, presents something of real value to radical theory. Along with Lévi-Strauss, Piaget has the distinction of being embraced by all sides in the current scene of French social theory. Though developing in the main stream of

1. Piaget, *Structuralism* (New York, 1970), p. 34.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

French psychology (publishing his first work on logic) the efforts to align his theories with Marxism has occupied such diverse figures as Goldmann and the Althusserians. Goldmann drew attention to Piaget's research in Goldmann's 1947 *Recherche Dialectique* and continued in his last work, *Marxisme et Sciences Humaines,* to argue that "genetic structuralism" was fundamentally the materialist dialectic.[2] It is worth briefly discussing, in this context, the meaning Piaget gives to "structuralism". Unfortunately the term has not only become the new French pass word for being theoretically *au courant* but tends to evoke knee-jerk reactions of condemnation or praise. Piaget developed, during his studies on cognitive development in children, a view that integrated problems of cognition with parallel investigations in mathematics and linguistics. The connecting links were that "laws" of a totality are distinct from its elements and are not gained through extractive abstraction. Piaget saw that the immediacy of some simple and primitive element on which a theory of associationism or behaviorism is built belies the fact that it is an element of complete abstraction (fully mediated). Thus the linear causality, for example, of a stimulus-response situation was not a given datum but a thin contentless generality falsely separated from its process of formation. Now a positive sense of abstraction, what Piaget calls "reflective abstraction" does not extract properties from things but sees the operations or activities that *form* a totality (this would mean understanding something through its mediations, what Marx called the method of the abstract-concrete). Such a view rejected both the atomistic theory of associations and a wholism which treats the totality as a static given. The laws of transformation that are the object of investigation are not formal laws precisely because they are operative and rooted in a totalizing activity. As Piaget emphasizes objectivity does not consist in being external to phenomena but in acting upon the object. The observable is nothing more than an effect of interaction between the subject and object of an experimental situation. Finally all structure is auto-regulative in the dual sense that its comprehension does not lie outside the structure (or its movement and genesis) and its "lawfulness" is, therefore, not beyond itself. Thus such a view of totality involves self-mediation rather than the projection of external mediation which is the foundation for any mechanistic theory. Not only did this allow a highly specific treatment of the structure of systems but interaction, for which "feedback" is the most appropriate model, need not be tied to the linear mode. Thus, for Piaget, the key characteristics of totalities or groups (a term he adopts from mathematics) is reversibility (a special use of the term implying negation in its dialectical sense) self-regulation and topological structure.[3] Also within his own research Piaget saw that structuration was continuous with construction so that its auto-genesis was itself a totalizing process. In this context Piaget resisted an *a priorism*,

2. This discussion occurs in Goldmann's article on *The Theses on Feuerbach* in *Marxisme et Sciences Humaines* (Paris, 1971). The entire first half of the book does not appear in the English translation.

3. This movement of structuration can be put in Telosian style. "The fundamental 'variables' or distinctions in dialectical phenomenology are: 1) the subjective field of immediate presence (e, determined as +e), 2) the objectifying events of mediation, negation and determination (−e) and 3) the self-mediated and self-determining co-relative mutuality of field-event resonance and feedback (+ − e which leads to e^1)." *Telos* no. 6, Kosok's "Dialectics of Nature", p. 73. The point is that the material to be integrated within Piaget's research demanded what Kosok calls a non-linear model even though Piaget remains tied to a traditional methodological approach. Therefore we are not suggesting that Piaget can be fully assimilated to the passage quoted above or that Piaget's theory of science is anything like Kosok's unified field theory of the sciences.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inherited from the strong Kantian tradition he shares with Lévi-Strauss, and the position of innate structure introduced into linguistics by Chomsky. He saw that the problem of genesis or the formative process of structuration could not be avoided by making temporality a condition of structure (Althusser's argument with regard to the atemporal character of scientific structures)' Such a view of structure leaves it "preformative" and ungenerated. It is for this reason that Piaget called for a rethinking of the relation of historical genesis and psycho-genesis, a connection which, for obvious reasons, Goldmann saw as the possible foundation for dialectcal materialism.

This general view of the role of system in science had been concretized within Piaget's approach to sensorimotor activity. Cognitive development was the unified organization of objects by the subject and the subject himself through objects. In this way he begins by attacking the associationist model of "abstraction" and emphasis abstraction (mediation) as differentiation which continually expands the integration of what is given by passing beyond it. In reflective abstraction the object is not, as he says, an "occasion" for knowledge to copy but is always already a mode of coordination. In his work on the formation of mathematical concepts he argues against such a false objectivism. "To attribute logic and mathematics to general coordinating activities of the subject is not to overestimate the role of the subject in its idealistic sense. This asserts that if the fecundity of his thought relates to the internal resources of the organism the efficacy of the thought relates to the fact that the organism is not independent of his *milieu* but only lives, acts, and thinks in interaction with it."[4] Though Piaget does not follow the structuralist tradition by immediately taking the transformation rules as immutable and sees a relation between formation and transformation this is not consistently interpreted dialectically.[5] Piaget does not maintain a dialectical approach throughout his work but is close to it in his concept of a totality that is simultaneously structured and structuring. He also sees the problems of his own approach in a very radical way, as in his opposition to anti-historical and anti-genetic structuralism. "But if what is wanted is a *general* theory of structure such as must meet the requirements of an interdisciplinary epistemology, then one can hardly avoid asking, when presented with such non-temporal systems as a mathematical group or a set of subsets, how these systems were *obtained* – unless, of course, one is willing to stay put in the heavens of transcendentalism."[6] It is precisely at this central problem of epistemology in the human sciences that Piaget's own conception of the problem prevents him from integrating history as a dimension of the formative process.

In what is now probably a familiar refrain Piaget situates the human sciences in a unique epistemological and methodological problem because while having man in his activities as its object it is elaborated by men in their cognitive activities. The dependence on man in the human sciences is therefore simultaneously as subject and object. The classical notion of "objectivity" maintained itself through a gradual detachment of the observer as long as the

4. A passage cited from Piaget's work in the article "Empirisme et Réalisme de Marx a Piaget" by Clara Dan appearing in *Epistémologie et Marxisme* (Paris, 1972).
5. Piaget's sections on current work in dialectics and its application to the social sciences is very weak. He does not discuss such issues as the subject-object dialectic or the meaning of praxis which is directly relevant to his own theory, but relegates dialectic to a descriptive methodology. For a very different overview of contemporary dialectical theories and a critique of Gurvitch's *Dialectique et Sociologie*, whose orientation Piaget follows, see Piccone, "Dialectical Logic Today", in *Telos* no. 2.
6. *Structuralism, op.cit.*, p. 13.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

observed phenomena were taken purely as object, providing a stable reference point. But the object as a conscious subject (taken in the broadest sense to include social wholes) is at once modified taken as an *object* of research while still as a subject forming itself through its own operational activity. Unfortunately Piaget attempts to level the dialectical movement of a structured-structuring totality by, in effect, artificially reproducing the separation of subject and object. He tries to transfer a notion developed in the study of cognitive "operators" which allow stable transformational rules and highly differentiated activity. This always involves, for Piaget, a *decentration* of the individuated subject to an epistemic subject. Piaget assumes he can establish a connection between the attainment of "objectivity" by the sciences and the role of decentration in cognitive psychology. I will quote the key passage in full.[7] "Certainly, when physics works on an object, at our current scale of observation, its object can be considered relatively independent of the subject. It is true, however, that the object is only known then by way of perceptions, which carry a subjective aspect, and thus a calculus, a metric or logico-mathematical structuration which is itself tied to the subject's activities. But it is advisable from the beginning to distinguish the individual subject, centered on his sense organs or on his action, that is the 'self' or egocentric subject as the source of deformation or possibilities of illusions of a 'subjective' nature in the primary sense of the term. Against this the decentered subject who coordinates his action against and with those of others who measure, calculate and deduce in a mutually verifiable fashion and therefore where epistemic activities are common to all subjects, even if one replaces those subjects by electronic or cybernetic machines following a pre-established logic and mathematics isomorphic to that of the human intellect. Thus, all the history of physics is that of a decentration which reduces to a *minimum* the deformation due to the egocentric subject to subordinate it to the *maximum* to the laws of the epistemic subject, which is to say that objectivity has become possible and that the object has been made relatively independent of the subject."

To attempt such an isolation of the "epistemic" subject is to reify the given conditions of scientific practice as a constant irrespective of its co-conditioning within a field of historical and social structures. The concept of epistemic subject supplies, for Piaget, the intersubjectivity and verifiable communication within scientific research. Thus he poses the problems of the human sciences as methodological, purely and simply an application of various *techniques* for accomplishing decentration. This treatment of theoretical practice as autonomously functioning wholly determined within its own theoretical operations allows Piaget to project into the very cognitive subject itself the historical separation of theory and practice. Such a functional "adirectional" subject *is* the cybernaut. To reject this does not mean, as Piaget suggests, that we must revert to a Feuerbachian humanism in which "man" becomes the stable reference point. The uncritical adoption of "man" as the criteria of truth only serves to "institutionalize" the present ideological deformation of subjects since eternalizing the "subject" as man eternalizes the ideological structure which *forms* him. But this is precisely Piaget's problem since he turns away from a radical questioning of scientific "objectivity" while trying, through approximations, to extend it to all areas of science. But what is extended then is saturated with ideological content. The decentration of the historical subject that is carried out

7. *Epistémologie des Sciences de l'Homme*, pp. 45-46.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to derive a lawful natural process secures, at the same time, the manipulative and dominative directions of reason (which remain concealed as long as conceptual operations are not integrated into their formative root, precisely what Piaget calls the fallacy of "preformative" structure). Both because "lawfulness" is detached from the activity of the human subject and the illusion is fostered that the attainment of theoretical objectivity is "neutral", directed toward no particular practical activity. Though Piaget is constantly critical of pure theory and *a prioristic* positions he is himself firmly bound to that tradition of bourgeois science. The ability to treat the historically determined separation of theory and practice as an ahistoric necessity is essential for "rationalizing" the separation of scientific activity from man's life activity – precisely the irrationality and crisis in the human sciences that Piaget begins with.

It is very symptomatic that Piaget concludes with problems of future research rooted in these very antinomies. He points out that any attempt to relate structure and temporal formation will have to deal with the paradox that cognitive psychogenesis and historical genesis are inverted. His central example is that in cognitive spatial development topological formation is prior to geometric and projective structures whereas in history the formalization of geometric structure came most immediately while topology had to wait for almost all other forms to be exhausted before it was taken as a valid spatial model. But to pose such a problem would involve precisely the historical, material, pre-theoretical determinations which form the conceptualized as such, which allow it to be intuitive, immediate, objective, natural. But this is what Piaget finds paradoxical for in posing the problem he has taken cognitive development in the individual as a *constant* and wondered why history does not *recapitulate the subject as present*, in all its accumulated conceptual mediations. The paradox arises because the present conditions of theoretical production posed by Piaget are not themselves taken beyond the implicit assumptions that determine theory in its role in *this* socio-historical totality and not eternally. The paradox only exists on the conditions that Piaget has established for the human sciences which by offering therapeutic methodology serves not to *extend* the sciences but to reproduce on a meta-level their restrictive conditions. The problems Piaget poses for the human sciences are falsely autonomous and can never be solved as meta-theoretical or purely methodological reforms because they lie determined simultaneously within and outside the theoretical structures. The dissolution of this orientation continually looms in the background of Piaget's own reflections, a view of science as a life activity which is *unconsciously* unified with practical ends. And in its very blindness to this "role", always and already there, science suffers the same deformation as other life activities in a social totality which must suppress human needs and ends. In Piaget's approach the unconscious nature of scientific practice remains secure simply because its actualization, ends and application are held wholly apart from its efficacy and truth as a continual block to critical self-reflection. In this way, as with any life activity crippled by its own contradictions, its revolutionary crisis is a problem to *manage* with a few well chosen reforms.

Robert D'Amico

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ANNOUNCING A CONFERENCE ON GRAMSCI:

During the first weekend of February, 1973, the Sociology Department of Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri) will hold a conference on the thought of Antonio Gramsci. Main addresses to be given by leading nationally and internationally known Gramsci scholars.

For more information, write: **Telos**, Department of Sociology, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri 63130.

Subscription Rates:

One year individual	$6.00
One year institutional	$8.00
Two year individual	$12.00
Two year institutional	$16.00

Available back issues: No. 3 (Spring 1969); $2.00; Nos. 7 - 12, $1.50 individual, $2.00 institutional. Canadian and foreign orders please add 10%.

Address all correspondence and manuscripts to:

TELOS
Department of Sociology
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri 63130
U.S.A.

Editor: *Paul Piccone*
Managing Editor: *Patricia Tummons*
Review Editor: *Paul Breines*
Production Staff: *Elias Vlanton, Thomas Hull, Ben Mijuskovic, James Watson*
Editorial Associates: *Andrew Arato, Robert D'Amico, Silvia Federici, Andrew Feenberg, Frederic Fleron, Lou Jean Fleron, Bart Grahl, David Gross, Dick Howard, Russell Jacoby, Michael Kosok William Leiss, Lee Smith, Ernest Yanarella*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARTICLES AND NOTES IN RECENT ISSUES OF TELOS

Number 7: Spring 1971

MIHALY VAJDA: Marxism, Existentialism, Phenomenology
MARIO MONTANO: Della Volpe's Marxism
CARL RATNER: Totalitarianism and Individualism
FRANCOIS GEORGE: Reading Althusser
VAJDA AND HELLER: Family Structure
MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY: Pravda
PAOLO GAMBAZZI: Dialectic of Abstract and Concrete
ANDREW ARATO: Lukács' Path to Marxism

Number 8: Summer 1971

GIANNI TROGU: Vasco Ronchi's Revolution in Optics
ANDREW FEENBERG: Technocracy and Rebellion
MIHALY VAJDA: On Fascism
MICHAEL KOSOK: The Phenomenology of Fucking
ENZO PACI: History and Phenomenology in Hegel's Thought
LUCIO COLLETTI: The Marxism of the Second International
TRAN DUC THAO: The Phenomenology of Mind and its Real Content
WILLIAM LEISS: Husserl's *Crisis*
PAUL PICCONE: Reading the *Crisis*
HERBERT MARCUSE: The Concept of Negation in the Dialectic

Number 9: Fall 1971

PAUL PICCONE: Phenomenological Marxism
MAYNARD SOLOMON: Beethoven, Sonata, and Utopia
SALVATORE VECA: Value, Labor, and the Critique of Political Economy
HOWARD PRESS: The Marxism and Anti-Marxism of Reich
CARL RATNER: Principles of Dialectical Psychology
JEAN PAUL SARTRE: Replies to Structuralism: An Interview
RUSSELL JACOBY: The Politics of Subjectivity

Number 10: Winter 1971 (Special Lukács Issue: Part I)

GEORG LUKACS: Moses Hess and the Problems of the Idealist Dialectic (1926)
DAVID KETTLER: Culture and Revolution
ANDREW FEENBERG: Reification and the Antinomies of Socialist Thought
RUSSELL JACOBY: Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism
GIAIRO DAGHINI: Lukács' Theory of the Offensive

Number 11: Spring 1972 (Special Lukács Issue: Part II)

GEORG LUKACS: The New Edition of Lassalle's Letters (1925)
ANDREW ARATO: Lukács Theory of Reification
PAUL BREINES: The Impact of Lukács and Korsch in the 20's
PAUL PICCONE: Dialectic and Materialism in Lukács
MARCO MACCIO: On the Later Lukács
SILVIA FEDERICI: Notes on Lukács' Aesthetics

Number 12: Summer 1972

MIHALY VAJDA: The Rise of Fascism in Italy and Germany
ANDRE GORZ: Technical Intelligence and the Division of Labor
HERB GINTIS: Activism and Counter-Culture
FLERON AND FLERON: Administration Theory and Repression
TRENT SCHROYER: Dialectical Foundations of Critical Theory
CRISTIANO CAMPORESI: Sidney Hook's Marxism

All of these issues are still available for a limited time. Order quickly!

Price: $2.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED